

Theme:

**Three things we need to know about falling in love and marriage which have benefit for all relationships. Key truths for ourselves, our loved ones and others with whom we may have relevant conversation**

Acknowledgement: *(If used for public worship)*

We meet on the land created by the Living God, given by Him for the enjoyment of all nations and races together. We honour the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ who reigns over this earth above all names and authorities. We respect and are grateful for the gifts He has endowed His people with, given for the perfection of reconciliation which he has created through His Death and Resurrection.

Call to Worship:

Once you were alienated from God and were hostile in your minds, engaging in evil deeds. But now He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy, unblemished, and blameless in His presence— if indeed you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope of the gospel you heard, which has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven.

Prayer of Invocation:

Our dear Father, let your Word be clear to us as we ponder and think at this moment so that we are struck deeply by this reconciliation you have made. Let us feel the wonder of peace of mind which it brings. Help us to turn every challenge in relationships into opportunities for reconciliation and increased holy love.

In Jesus Name, Amen

Hymn: by Charles Wesley

1. Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heaven, to earth come down,  
fix in us thy humble dwelling, all thy faithful mercies crown.  
Jesus, thou art all compassion, pure, unbounded love thou art.  
Visit us with thy salvation; enter every trembling heart.
2. Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit into every troubled breast.  
Let us all in thee inherit, let us find the promised rest.  
Take away the love of sinning; Alpha and Omega be.  
End of faith, as its beginning, set our hearts at liberty.
3. Come, Almighty, to deliver, let us all thy grace receive.  
Suddenly return, and never, nevermore thy temples leave.  
Thee we would be always blessing, serve thee as thy hosts above,  
pray, and praise thee without ceasing, glory in thy perfect love.

4. Finish, then, thy new creation; true and spotless let us be.  
Let us see thy great salvation perfectly restored in thee.  
Changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place,  
till we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love and praise.

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### Scriptures:

- Ephesians 5.21-33.  
*Note carefully the way of love for a wife and for a husband. Also discern how this directs our attitude towards Jesus our Lord.*

### Hymn: by Charles Wesley

1. All praise to our redeeming Lord, who joins us by His grace,  
And bids us, each to each restored, together seek His face.
2. He bids us build each other up;  
And, gathered into one, to our high calling's glorious hope we hand in hand go on.
3. The gift which He on one bestows, we all delight to prove;  
The grace through every vessel flows, in purest streams of love.
4. We all partake the joy of one; the common peace we feel;  
A peace to worldly minds unknown, a joy unspeakable.
5. And if our fellowship below in Jesus be so sweet,  
What height of rapture shall we know, when round His throne we meet.

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### Message

There are three things you won't hear about marriage today that are essential for a good and ever-improving marriage. Our prevailing 'me-first' culture doesn't like commitment or the hard yards required for building solid, lasting relationships. Pledged vows are replaced with pleasure sentiments. Some couples prefer to make pre-nuptial legal agreements lest the marriage fails.

But for those who hope for rich and deepening marriages into their golden years there are three great truths to embrace and pursue in practice. Some will know these but perhaps you can pass them on to those younger ones you care for who might listen and receive your counsel.

Here they are:

#### **1. Get things in the right order.**

Start making a nest first. Observe the birds, they make a nest then lay their eggs! Signal your seriousness to the one you are attracted to then put your emotions on ice somewhat

until the preconditions are in place. That season is called engagement or betrothal in earlier times. Then marry.

When I first approached my father-in-law-to-be and asked for his daughter's hand in marriage, he basically said 'no'. I had no sound employment, no house, basically pretty much nothing just raw emotion. I kind of knew the answer and had to knuckle down to get things sorted before I could take on the responsibilities required.

To those falling in love, let me say, don't just start living together in intimacy. Worse, don't do that just to 'see how things work out', a kind of having it all in a trial period before you are committed to a lifelong partnership. Couples who do that have a far decreased likelihood of a successful marriage. Or if you do elope, as it is actually called, consider yourself fully married regardless of a marriage service.

Sexual intimacy seals lifelong marriage. Look at the problems if this isn't adhered to. As an aside here, I support the idea of young men who make a girl pregnant being legally and financially bound to support her and the child rather than leaving it all to her and walking away to another encounter as often happens these days with our sickly diminished sense of human responsibility.

### **2. Marriage is for the improvement of your character.**

We learn best where we are loved most. Where we can most be honest and transparent. Where we can be rebuked without the relationship ending. Seeing fault is a doorway into a deeper love. Marriage is a superior love-bonded relationship where this can happen. A wonderful sacred gift from our Creator.

The pattern of love Christ requires us to follow by His grace is such that when we are irked or see fault in our beloved, rather than rejection we must more deeply receive and love them. Read again those verses in Ephesians chapter five, verses twenty-five to twenty-seven. This is also standard behaviour for life in the Body of Christ which is the image of the marriage relationship.

A married woman recently shared this with me "Marriage is an incredible ground for mutual growth! Is your marriage growing you? If not, there is more potential waiting to be tapped! Are you ready to harness this potential?"

### **3. Realise that a man loves in a certain way. And a woman loves in a certain way.**

If both are nourished nothing will separate you. A husband cherishes his wife, a wife honours her husband. Of course, there is overlap but these are the most basic motivational ways of expressing love in marriage.

If a wife knows that her husband who works all day in an environment of pretty secretaries who do their best to turn up every day looking and smelling the best they can, if she knows she is cherished above all women by her husband she will rest, assured of and in his faithfulness.

Likewise, if he knows that in her eyes and heart, he is honoured, respected and admired by his wife, the one who knows him best and loves him most, he will walk with a straight back

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and head uplifted in spite of flack and criticism he may receive at work or elsewhere.

That's how it is. And these ways and attitudes cannot be forced or manipulated, they can only be given, endowed from hearts and wills of genuine love.

This is how Christ loves even us. He cherishes us, talks of us with pride, seeks our best and remains faithful in his promises to us.

### Prayer:

Dear Father, your Son walked obediently to death even upon a cross to save us and bring us every day into abundant life. Thank you for this great unfailing, cherishing love. We love you and will honour you every day in gratitude. Help us to serve you unfailingly, in Jesus Name.

### Hymn: by Washington Gladden

1. O Master, let me walk with thee in lowly paths of service free; tell me thy secret;  
Help me bear the strain of toil, the fret of care.  
Help me the slow of heart to move by some clear winning word of love;  
Teach me the wayward feet to stay, and guide them in the homeward way.
2. Teach me thy patience; still with thee in closer, dearer company,  
In work that keeps faith sweet and strong, in trust that triumphs over wrong.  
In hope that sends a shining ray far down the future's broadening way;  
In peace that God alone can give, with thee, O Master, let me live.

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### Benediction:

Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

This service prepared for HopeNet SA by Rev Ian Clarkson