

“The Holiness of Marriage”
Hebrews 13:1-4

Marriage is not held in honor today. It is looked down upon or regarded lightly. A relationship of convenience not commitment.

I. Honor marriage

"honor": valuable, costly, precious. 1 Peter 1:19 (precious blood)

Marriage – Most important of all human relationships

A. Created by God – Gen. 2:18-25

B. Most accurate reflection of the image of God – Gen. 1:26-27

C. Next generation

Means of propagating the human race.

Means of raising up godly offspring, future worshippers – Gen. 1:28

D. Strong culture

Foundational structure for a healthy society.

E. Christ and the Church

Marriage reflects relationship between Christ and the church – Eph. 5:31-33

Marriage is an evangelistic tool

"Among all" – there is no place or person to whom this does not apply (married, never been married, unhappily married.) Marriage is a wonderful thing, even if you are not enjoying its benefits right now.

If you are married, it is your most important commitment. It is more important than your job. It is more important than your children. It is first and it is foundational.

If you are hoping to get married one day – prepare now

If you don't anticipate ever marrying – support the marriages around you.

II. Keep it holy

What does this mean? Physical relationship between man and wife.

Undefined – Word normally associated with worship, used of our high priest - Heb. 7:26

Marriage is holy. Marriage is a setting for worship.

Sexuality is sacred ground. One of the 7 sacraments in the Catholic church.

If you are single, purity is your preparation for this commitment.

III. Beware the Judge

Why does God react so strongly to violating marriage purity?

Heb. 12:25-29; GRACE AND accountability

Community given two callings – worship and witness

Body is the vehicle for worship; The temple of God – 1 Cor. 6:18-20; Eph. 2:19-22

Witness

Marriage reflects relationship between Christ and church

Why, if this is such an important relationship, would we be tempted to destroy it through unfaithfulness? Why, knowing that we will be judged, would we be unfaithful?

Discontentment, greed, covetousness, idolatry

Don't value spouse (neutral); denigrate spouse

Not satisfied with what God has given; even singleness

How do we guard ourselves?

- Flee – Example: Joseph
- Environment for success
 - Make no provision for the flesh
 - Don't meet alone
 - Quit your job
- Live honest, transparent life. Have accountability.
- Learn contentment

- Focus on what you have. Cultivate a thankful heart.
Not complacency or passivity

- Pursue intimacy, not isolation
 - Family life
 - Books
 - Five Languages of Love*
 - Building Your Mate's Self-Esteem*
 - The Secret of Loving*
 - Invest in the most important human relationship

There is hope for recovery from past failure

Several influential figures in the Bible failed. There is restoration. There may be consequences, but you can still have a life of worship and witness.

Conclusion

- No matter what your history, begin today
- We hold marriage in honor
- People drawn to Christ through our marriages
- Married – meet with spouse; move toward intimacy
- Single – meet with friend; maintain purity