

## From This Day Forward

### Never Give Up

For the last several weeks we have been focused on Marriage and if you are new here today I will briefly give a recap of those messages.

First we talked about Communication, then we focused on Praying together and seeking our number One with our number Two. Then we talked about how to fight fair. Remember our goal is resolution not victory at all costs. From there we talked about From This Day Forward we will Have Fun. How do you have fun? Face to Face time, Shoulder to Shoulder time and who can forget Belly Button to Belly Button Time? Today we will turn our focus to, From This Day Forward Never Give Up.

Turn with me to **Matthew 19:3-6**

**“Some Pharisees came to Jesus to test him. They asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?”**

Unfortunately, during this time women were seen as property. The man owned the house, land, livestock and his wife. A man could say in that culture, “I don’t want you” and he could divorce his wife.

The Pharisees were trying to trap Jesus in this little box but Jesus shocks everyone there. Jesus doesn’t just raise the standard a little bit or a lot, he takes it to the top and shocks every listener.

He says in **Verse 4 “Haven’t you read, he replied, that at the beginning the creator made them male and female, and said, 5 for this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and**

**the two will become one flesh? 6 So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore, what God has joined together, let man not separate.”**

What he is not saying is “you no longer have a personality, or gifts, or identity.” But what he is saying is that the two are now one flesh, united before God. That’s why he said, **6“So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore, what God has joined together, let man not separate.”**

It’s like taking two pieces of cardboard and gluing them together and after having the glue dry pulling them apart. Why do you think a divorce hurts so much? Those that have been through know what I mean.

If I try to rip these apart what’s going to happen? It’s going to get messy. Andy Stanley says, **“You can’t unone what God made One.”**

The problem in our culture is people do not understand what marriage is. They think marriage is an agreement or a contract but the reality is, marriage is a covenant not a contract.

What is a contract? A contract is based on mutual Distrust. A covenant is based on mutual Commitment.

So what does a contract do? Contracts limit my responsibilities and increases my rights. If were in a contract with one another, it simply means I’m in as far as your in. If I rent you a home, I will have you sign a contract. Why? Because I don’t know you and you don’t know me. If you don’t agree to do what you have agreed to do, then I can remove you. And for your benefit, if I don’t do what I said that I would do then you have judgment against me. I trust you as far as you perform. If you don’t live up to my expectations, then you are out and that is what so many people do with marriage.

As long as you make me happy, meet my needs. As long as nothing better comes along then we will stick with this, but if you don't live up to your end of the contract then I'm out. But marriage is not a contract it's a covenant.

What's a covenant? A covenant is a permanent relationship. God is a covenantal God. So what do you do when you feel like you have been trying but you haven't been getting anywhere?

I want you to remember the principles of "Sowing and Reaping in marriage." **Galatians 6:7-9 "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. 8 The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. 9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."**

Let me give you two principles of sowing and reaping in your marriage.

### **1. You Reap What You Sow.**

- If I put an apple seed in the ground will I get corn? No, you're going to get an apple tree because you sowed an apple seed. If someone smiles at you what are you likely to get back? A smile back. If someone flips you off, what are you likely to do back? You pray for them and bless them because you are a Christian!!!!
- In marriage if someone shows grace and compassion and thoughtfulness, what are you likely to get back? Answer: Grace, thoughtfulness, and compassion.

- If someone is always complaining, comparing and is always critical over and over what's going to happen? You will likely come back with defensiveness and anger and justification. The harvest is determined by the seed that you plant.
- Men don't miss this. Women are multipliers. Whatever you give them, they multiply. If you give them tenderness, compassion and understanding, they are going to give you some belly button to belly button time!!!! Somebody say Amen!!
- Guys, you give them a hard time and they will give you H-E-double hockey sticks!!
- Bottom line, men, women. If you don't like what you've been getting, then look what you've been giving!! That will preach!!!! Don't point your finger at them. You reap what you sow.

## **2. The second thing is: You Reap Where You Sow.**

- If I plant a seed over there will I reap a tree over here? If I plant all of my energy into my hobby, will that make my marriage be better? No, I'm going to get better at golf or fishing or gardening but it's not going to help my marriage. If we put all of our energy into our kids and become a child centered marriage will that help my marriage? No it's not. Maybe that's where some of you are right now.

- Why aren't things been going great? Because you haven't been seeking God. You haven't been fighting fare. You haven't been having fun. That's why you feel like giving up.
- Remember God is our number one and our spouse is our number two. If anything else moves into that number two spot, then our marriage isn't going to be what God wants it to be. Decide today that your marriage will be as good as you decide it will be. That's it. Circle the word we and decide. It takes both of us as ONE.