

Jesus in the Home

I Peter 3:1-7

Introduction

Married at First Sight is a reality tv show that has run for 14 seasons and has generated good tv ratings for its producers. The show features a group of 3-5 couples paired up by relationship experts and who then agree to marry. The couple then lives together as a married couple for 8 weeks - after which they decide whether or not to remain married or to get a divorce.

Over 12 completed seasons - 44 couples had been matched - of which 27 chose to stay married on decision day [at the end of 8 weeks] - however - another 11 couples later divorced leaving only 16 couples still married - or a success rate of 36%

The show is not without its critics

One of the therapists quit the show - because she felt sick over what contestants were going through and was worried about their *mental health*

Another therapist - Susan Lackner - calls the show completely unethical - as she believes some couples are paired up merely to produce conflict and higher ratings.

The allurements of the show is the risk factor - - - will this relationship that has been put together in such a way by the experts thrive or will it crash and burn?

One woman contestant ended up filing for a restraining order against her match

At least one of the show's brides has complained that she was purposely edited to portray a narrative the show wished to create.

Some fans have argued that clearly many of the contestants can't do any worse in picking their own match - since the experts do not seem to be having too high of a success rate

What makes for a good marriage?

As Christians - we believe God is the ultimate marriage expert - He invented marriage and He alone can tell us what it is for and how it is to function

God looked at Adam and said it was not good for him to be alone [only thing not good] – so he made a helper or helpmate suitable for him – Eve – 1st woman

Gen. 2:18 - 'Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make a helper suitable for Him.'

God was the first match-maker

Marriage is a sacred institution created by God for the good of the man and woman / for the good of children / for the good of society - in which stable family units support a flourishing community

Marriage is a blessing given unto men and women - - - but it has been impacted by the Fall of humanity into sin - - - which makes the marriage relationship difficult and at times a scene of conflict

Tim Keller: 'The Bible begins with a wedding (of Adam and Eve) and ends in the book of Revelation with a wedding (of Christ and the church). Marriage is God's idea . . . the roots of human marriage are in God's own action, and therefore what the Bible says about God's design for marriage is crucial.' [The Meaning of Marriage]

I. A Word to the Wives - vv. 1-2

Peter turns to address the behavior of husbands and wives in Christian marriage

Peter reaffirms the biblical model for marriage that Paul gave in Eph. 5

Husbands are called to be loving leaders in the home and wives are called to respect and affirm that leadership

These roles were established by the creator at the creation – Genesis 1,2

Now Peter addresses a more particularized situation:

What if the husband isn't a Christian?

What should the wife do then?

Should she divorce him?

Should she argue and dispute with him over every little peccadillo

Should she badger him into becoming a Christian?

What is she to do in this most sensitive of situations?

Peter says – continue to respect him and find ways to support him – without compromising your faith – because that is God's design for marriage

One might summarize Peter's word to wives in this situation: 'Live so well that your husband is glad that you follow Jesus'

That really is a good benchmark for both husband and wife in all marriages

Make your spouse glad they married a Christian - - - because a person walking with the Lord - - - and evidencing the fruits of the Spirit - - - is going to be an easier and more pleasant person to be married to - - - and their values are going to reflect biblical wisdom principles - - - that will tend to enrich and bless the home

Paul spoke directly to the issue of divorce in this situation

I Corinthians 7:13 - 'And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, let her not send her husband away.'

Paul says - 'take divorce off the table' - - - that's not the solution

There are times for divorce - - - cases of adultery / violent abuse

But - more often than not - - - God wants married couples to remain committed to the marriage relationship - not run from challenges but rather to learn and grow thru them - demonstrate the virtues of commitment / sacrifice

Christians are called to accept their circumstances as their assignment to glorify God in that particular setting

That is how Peter approaches the scenario here

It would be very tempting for a Christian wife to disrespect an unbelieving husband - - - 'well - what does he know? / He worships idols / or is a pagan / etc.'

Instead of disrespect - the wife should seek to live such a godly life - that her husband is won to the faith by her

Peter calls her to seek to win him over with her gentle and respectful behavior

Even an unbelieving husband can see the divine wisdom and virtue in such behavior

The danger is to think: 'If I just keep working him over – he'll cave like Samson did to Delilah!'

'He'll come to church – be a Christian'

To persist in talking to someone who doesn't want to hear the truth - often - only makes them harder

We have to remember – true conversion is never the work of man – human manipulation or emotional ploys – it is the work of *God's Spirit in the heart producing faith and repentance*

MacArthur: 'Peter's point here is that the wife's godly behavior is the most valuable testimony to open the husband's heart to the gospel.'

There is a word to the unmarried here – 'don't marry an unbeliever'
Don't even marry someone who is questionable

If a prospective partner has no interest in God or church before they dated you – don't expect they will after you are married

In this sinful world - every marriage will have its difficulties - - - but when two people don't share the same faith or bow to the same Lord - those difficulties are multiplied

II. Inner Beauty - vv. 3-6

Peter here refers to the quiet and gentle spirit / and that of inner beauty

Quietness refers to the opposite of a quarrelsome spirit - not mute or a whisperer

Gentle = not pushy or selfishly assertive

Prov. 21:9 - 'it is better to live in a corner of a roof than in a house shared with a contentious woman!'

Ladies – if your husband is up on the roof trying to fix the antenna a little too often . . . he may be trying Solomon's advice!

Pushy / critical / combative - - - are not fruits of the Spirit!

Sam Jones [19th century Preacher]: 'the finest tombstone I ever saw and the prettiest epitaph I ever saw, was when I was visiting an old friend of mine. After dinner he took me into the garden, and in the most prominent place there was erected a beautiful tombstone of white marble, in memory of his wife. The simple epitaph was this line: 'She made home pleasant.'

When Jesus is Lord over your soul - - - it's going to pull the home in the direction of pleasantness for both husband and wife

Talk of jewelry and clothing does not mean that a Christian wife should look as plain as she can

In her diary - Ruth Graham - [wife of Billy] recorded one incident where Billy was preaching in London - and Ruth was with him - he suggested she not wear lipstick - because most of the British Christian women did not at the time [1954]

Ruth wrote in her diary: 'Bill stooped from being a man of God to become a meddlesome husband and ordered my lipstick off. There was a lively argument - then I wiped it off. He got so busy getting the bags together I managed to put more on without notice . . . it doesn't seem to me to be a credit to Christ to be drab.'

Ruth understood that the Bible does not forbid makeup / etc.

Although that idea had become fashionable for a time in some Christian circles

Richard Lenski: 'The idea is not that women should dress in Quaker drab, but that they should be beyond the vanity of display in order to attract attention to themselves.'

The focus of Scripture - is on the idea that inner beauty - character is the more important beauty -- - and that should lead us away from vain or immodest attire - but not necessarily into plain or unattractive styles

For both men and women - character is always more important than outward appearance

Righteousness / faithfulness / love for Jesus --- those are the garments of the godly

Prov. 31:30 - 'Charm is deceitful, beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised.'

If we pay more attention to the way we look than to the health of our soul -- - we have the wrong focus

A missionary once came to our church - he saw the small mirror in the entry way - and was kind of perturbed about it

'Why is this here?' - he said

I said - 'I suppose b/c the wind is always blowing in Iowa.'

He continued - acting like it was a piece of blasphemy - but I wasn't taking the bait

I think we can easily go to extremes - where we strain out a gnat and miss the whole point

Peter says, 'focus on inner beauty'

He does not say, 'You are more spiritual if you tell old ladies - they can't fix their hair when they come in out of a wind tunnel.'

Principles of moderation - common sense apply

III. A Husband with Knowledge - v. 7

Here Peter moves to address the husbands - who are called to live with their wives in an understanding way - or according to knowledge

In marriage - the toxic brew is the 'my feelings matter - yours don't' approach

My needs / my wants / my preferences always come first

You sacrifice and give - I'll take and be satisfied

That's a formula for disaster

Marriage involves give and take

The opposite of v. 7 - 'Dwell with your wife in ignorance - just walk in blindness - think only of yourself / never under any circumstances should you consider her ahead of yourself!'

Philippians 2:3, 4 - 'Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than yourselves. Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.'

Sometimes men [in our day] need to be called to give something we call commitment to a relationship

Many men are unwilling to commit to marriage - in a day where you can often get the milk without buying the cow

Dr. Laura Schlesinger gave this account of a fellow named Dan - 33 / divorced and who began dating a widow with two young children. He said that he likes the kids and loves Noel - but he's afraid to commit to marriage. His previous wife had been unfaithful - so now he is afraid to make that commitment again.

Dr. Laura asked him if he'd been too afraid to have sex again? [well - no]

She added: 'Have you been too afraid to spend time with the children and have them come to rely on you?' [no - again]

'Have you been too afraid to ask her to date only you and be sexually monogamous?' [no - repeated Dan]

'Have you been too afraid to enjoy her companionship and the feeling of a family?' [well - no]

Dr. Laura: 'So the fear has been in the giving, not the taking.' I told him he'd been so busy worrying about his potential hurt feelings that he hadn't noticed how self-centered and selfish he'd become. He hadn't even told Noel about not wanting to commit; he just kept taking and taking.'

Dan - of course - had never thought of it that way

Marriage is give and take - it involves thinking of the other person / their needs / their feelings / their desires

Marriage is a gift from God - to be held in honor

The Christian view of marriage in 1st century - was in stark contrast to much of the culture around them

Demosthenes [a Greek statesman]: 'We have prostitutes for the sake of pleasure; we have concubines for the sake of daily cohabitation; we have wives for the purpose of having children legitimately, and of having a faithful guardian for all our household affairs.'

Most of the Roman emperors were bisexual / homosexual
Nero was a pedophile

Christianity came with a much higher view of marriage - and human sexuality

Heb. 13:4 - 'Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.'

Christianity elevated the institution of marriage where it was embraced

As a culture - we seem to be in regression

Maturity in character - recognizes principles such as honor / virtue / sacrifice / integrity / commitment / faithfulness - - - these are the things that give meaning and value to our lives

If you want to live a meaningless shallow life - stand for nothing / honor nothing / sacrifice for nothing / be uncommitted and flaky

But - if you want a life of meaning and purpose - adopt God's values - and stand for them

Prayer lives can be hindered

All sin hinders prayer

Psalm 66:18 - 'If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear.'

If men don't pay attention to their wives - God won't pay attention to them!

A harsh or wicked husband does great damage to the home life of the wife and children

Legal scholar Stephen Carter writes on marriage law - with great understatement

Stephen Carter: 'To make the family an emotionally unsafe place for one's spouse will almost never be an act of integrity; it will almost always be an act of selfishness.'

Husbands that abuse their wives or children - are storing up wrath unto to the day of the righteous judgment of God

Emotional maturity - is learning to rise above the impulses of the flesh and be governed by godly principles

Biblical manhood is on display when men sacrifice for their wives and children - - - Use their abilities and power to uplift and bless those around them

There is an old Humphrey Bogart movie called, 'The African Queen'. Bogart plays Charlie the solitary sailor - who got drunk the night before

The next day he is speaking with Rose - a missionary [played by Katherine Hepburn] - - who expresses her disapproval of his behavior

Charlie: 'What are you being so mean for, Miss? A man takes a drop too much once in a while. It's only human nature.'

Rose: 'Nature, Mr. Allnut, is what we were put on this earth to rise above.'

To live only up to the bar of our nature [our fallen nature] - is to live a life with no character / no commitments / no standards / no values / no principles / no discipline -which many do in our age!

When God comes into our lives - - - we recognize that we were made for something higher

That something higher - is a life lived to the glory of God in conformity to God's Word by the power of the Holy Spirit thru faith in Christ - reflected in our commitments to our marriages and to our families

Conclusion

The model of commitment in marriage is found in Christ Himself

We can be saved because Christ is a faithful Savior - and went to the cross for us

John Piper: 'Jesus never forsakes His bride, the church. He never abandons her. He never abuses her. He always loves her. He always takes her back when she wanders. He always is patient with her. He always cares for her and provides for her and protects her and, wonder of wonders, delights in her. And you - you who are married once, married five times, married never - if you repent and trust Christ - receive Him as the treasure who bore your punishment and became your righteousness - you are in the bride. And that is how He relates to you.'