



**Exploring the Kingdom of God through Matthew:
Divorce-Proofing your Marriage 3.0 Part 2:
The Practical Principles!
Dec 3, 2017**

Holy Text: Matthew 5:31-32

DIVORCE-PROOFING YOUR MARRIAGE 3.0: THE PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES

1. **Protect Your Covenant!**

- Mal 2:14 - "...She is thy companion and your wife of thy covenant."
- Remember our working definition of covenant: "A binding and solemn agreement to do or keep from doing a specified thing; a spiritual, conditional agreement between God and His children."
- Also remember that by definition, a covenant is binding. It is a spiritually "legal" agreement, and not to be broken. Covenants by design are meant to be **lifelong**. The Marriage Covenant is between one man, one woman, and Christ.
- At a minimum, protecting your covenant involves:
 1. An awareness that your covenant **needs** to be protected! (Watch, pray, look, beware!)
 2. A commitment to lifelong marriage. Consider "divorce a curse word!"
 3. An obsession with keeping yourself and your marriage bed pure. This is all about **boundaries!**
 - a. Refuse to fellowship with adulterous, sin-casual people (2 Thess 3:14-15).
 - b. Realize you cannot have "close" opposite sex friends. (Again, we are assuming everyone is heterosexual!)
 - c. Realize the danger of social networking and technology. If your wife/husband can't log into all your accounts, pick up your cell phone at any time, or look in your wallet or purse, something is radically wrong!
 - d. Don't email/text/Facebook/internet chat/Imessage/FaceTime/Linkden/tweet/IM/Google talk/Instagram, etc (whew!) with the opposite sex without including your spouse. Even with "work" related communications, accountability is needed.
 - e. Never meet, eat or travel with the opposite sex alone. :)
 - f. Beware of the lure of pornography.
 - g. Be careful with TV, computers, and books. Recognize that watching certain shows/reading certain books can impact your view of your spouse.
 4. A home filled with worship, prayer, and discipleship! Daily prayer and catechism helps protect any marriage! (See www.D6Reformation.org)
 5. A radical devotion to Christ and His Word.
 - Commit to the precepts, patterns, and principles of God's word. Declare sola scriptura in your home! Fight for multigenerational faithfulness!
 - The obeyed Word of God protects any biblical covenant and produces security. Security is synonymous with trust, and is the foundation of intimacy. Intimacy strengthens covenant. This is the cycle you want.

2. **Practice** Your **Communication!**

- Eph 4:29-32 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. 30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.
- Communicating effectively means moving from the external to the heart. Very few couples communicate on this level. It takes tremendous courage, even for married people, and requires time.
- **Fear** is one of the greatest enemies of the kind of communication that divorce-proofs a marriage. Spouses are afraid that their hopes, dreams, thoughts, needs, or fears will be laughed at, ignored, misunderstood, or marginalized.
- Here are some things that will help this process along...
 1. Pray together.
 2. When conflicts arise, repent quickly. (Eph 4:26-27 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: 27 Neither give place to the devil.)
 3. Go to church TOGETHER. I know this is simple but many people don't/won't do this.
 4. Serve together when possible.
 5. Try to have "mommy/daddy" time each day...even if it's late and only for a few minutes and/or set aside a few hours weekly for fun/quality time.
 6. "Fellowship" ahem...OFTEN!
 7. Go on a date-nights monthly and a vacation yearly.
 8. Remember special days. Don't forget to give gifts! (They don't always have to be expensive.)

3. **Prioritize** Your **Cash!**

- Pro 22:7 The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.
- Pro 21:5 ESV - The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty.
- Agreeing on your spending to a large degree means you've agreed on your **values** and priorities.
- Money fights, money problems, money stress, and "financial adultery" are always among the top 2-3 causes of divorce in America.
- Suggestions to avoid money issues:
 1. Work hard! Husbands, make sure your household can function financially (1 Tim 5:8). Make sure there is a vision and mission for the home (Prov 29:18).
 2. Live on a budget that you both work on and have agreed to...DO A BUDGET EVERY MONTH and do not break it unless you both agree! (Prov 27:23-24, Luke 14:28).
 3. Get out of debt! Unless you want "distress" and "discontent" in your marriage! (1 Sam 22:2)
 4. Spend less than you make so there is a surplus instead of a shortage....SAVE! Aim for at least 3-6 months of expenses in the bank. (Also known as Baby Step 3.)
 5. Be generous givers to your local church and to those in need. This helps you to avoid selfishness in marriage and forces you to work/pray together.
 6. Realize that as a married couple, it's "our" money not "my" money. There is no "my" in marriage...only "our." DO NOT separate your money! Have joint accounts, joint check books, joint savings, joint debit cards. Separating your money is separating your **life!**

4. **Pursue** Your **Call!**

- Remember, one of the goals of biblical marriage is to pursue the Dominion Mandate:

The Dominion Mandate is the command to establish the rule of Jesus Christ in all areas and jurisdictions of life (the Family, the Church, and the State); the intentional expansion of His Kingdom by His subjects, the preaching of the Gospel, the discipling of hearts, and the raising up of godly generations that declare, “Your Kingdom come, and your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

- In other words, your home and marriage must fulfill its role in “taking dominion!”
- This includes training, discipling and releasing godly children, pursuing multigenerational faithfulness, leaving a financial and relational legacy, and pushing Christ’s agenda on the earth right now!
- So, a married couple that escapes the ghetto mentality (“A conscious or sub-conscious acceptance of mediocrity and life beneath God’s purpose”) begins to:
 1. Pray for God’s direction for their family daily.
 2. See work (both in and outside the home) through Kingdom lenses and therefore desires to expand and grow in that, including promotions, work ethic, time management, exercise, etc.
 3. Think about how their home can impact their community with the Gospel of Jesus.
 4. Welcome people into their home for fellowship and intentional discipleship (hospitality).
 5. See their growing wealth as a tool for God to use to build His Kingdom.
 6. Think about Kingdom industry flowing out of the home that additional streams of income might flow in!
 7. See their marriage as a platform for **education** for their children for Christ’s glory.
- Don’t let your marriage be aimless! Be intentional!

5. **Parent** Your **Children!**

- Psa 127:3 Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.
- Pro 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.
- Since Christian homes are losing 70-88% of their youth by the end of their freshman year of college, we must do a better job of raising our children.
- Many arguments, money fights, and other stresses in marriage come over children.
- Therefore, here is our simple strategy to “Reclaim our Children through the Power of Jesus Christ” AND help divorce-proof marriages in the process: (www.D6Reformation.org)
 1. Obey the parental mandate set forth in Deuteronomy 6:1-12 and Ephesians 6:1-4.
 2. Teach and live the Word at home each day.
 3. Make family worship a priority.
 4. Bring back the Catechism (a simple summary of doctrine) and use it daily.
 5. Develop a family covenant and vision. (www.crcchesapeake.org/church/write-your-family-covenant)
 6. Get Fathers back in their place (again, Eph 6:4).
 7. Consider the effects of government/secular education on the minds of our children.

Divorce proofing your marriage requires some effort...some real intentionality. But it is worth it! May we do all the above consistently for the glory of God, with the love of Jesus, and in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen!

APPLICATIONS/INTENTIONAL GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES:

1. Regardless of your marital state, list five things you learned from this sermon that you want to immediately implement into your life.
2. Choose an accountability partner to help you with number one.
3. In your family worship, consider recasting the Imagine Vision. (Grab a tract from the foyer if you need to.)

MY TOP 5 MARRIAGE BOOKS

1. *The Holy Bible*. Reread and reread and reread Ephesians 4/5/6, 1 Peter 3, Matthew 19, Malachi 2, Titus 2, Colossians 3, etc.
2. *Love and Respect* by Emerson Eggerichs
3. *Maximize Your Marriage* by B. Courtney McBath
4. *Total Money Makeover* by Dave Ramsey
5. *Family-Driven Faith* by Voddie Baucham

SPECIAL MENTIONS:

1. *Me? Obey Him?* by Elizabeth Handford Rice (from Sis. Donna)
2. *The Playbook* by Carlton C. McLeod (to gain a unified vision concerning Kingdom life)