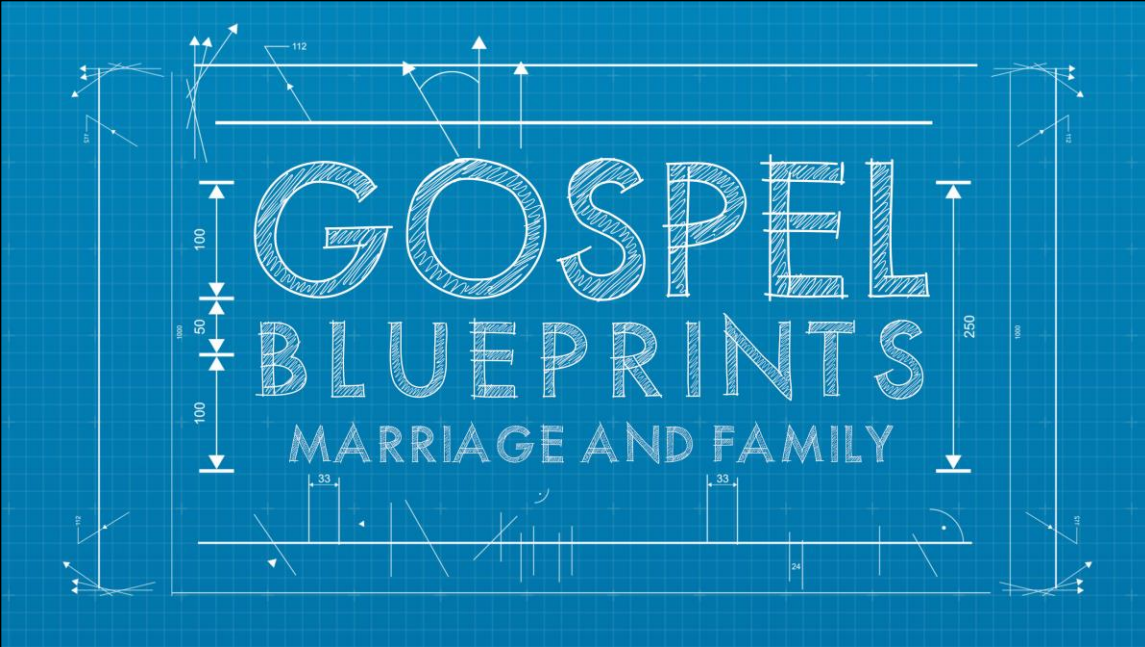


Good morning! Today we are continuing in our GOSPEL BLUEPRINTS sermon series, this morning focusing on God's design for ***Marriage and Family***.

Now this is a very important topic. But unfortunately God's original design for marriage & family has been a bit lost in our society today. And what we are going to try to accomplish this morning is to uncover God's original purpose for marriage and family.

[I also want to say at the start, there are many here or listening online who are not married, or don't have children. I want you to know that you are very much included in this sermon. The reason being is that even if you aren't married or don't have children, possessing the truth from God about marriage and family can be a lifeline to those whom God has placed on your path.]

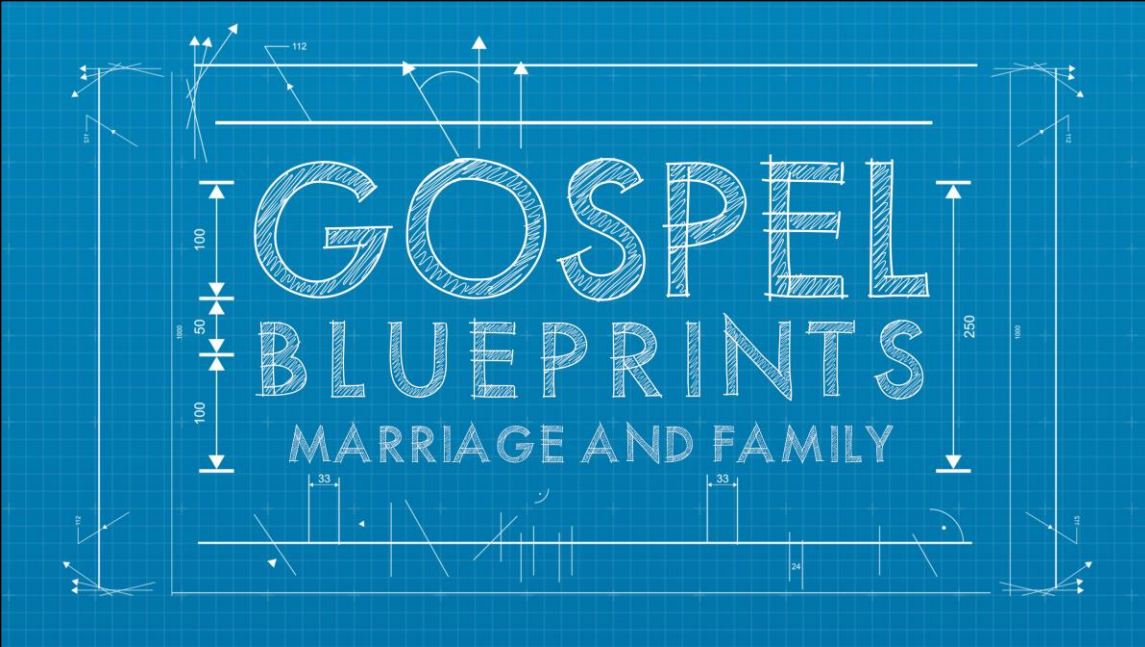


So don't tune out if you've yet to be married, or yet to have children, God can use you to bless others as you download His blueprint for marriage and family.]

Pray:

If you were to ask the average person on the street today what the purpose of marriage is, you would probably get a wide range of answers. Many might be honest enough to say they don't know.

There is a website, marriage.com that has asked the question what is the purpose of marriage, (from a secular perspective) and what they found was that the #1 answer was that ***the purpose of marriage is to make people happy.***



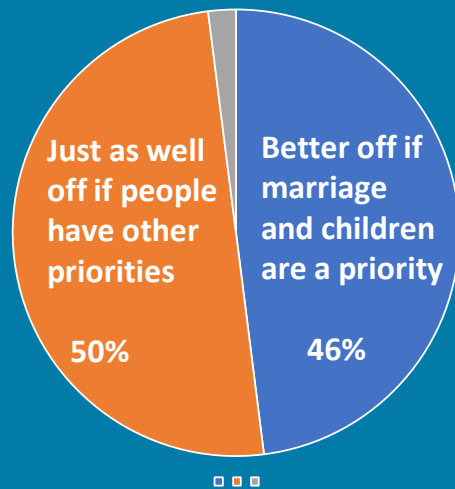
And honestly I'm not surprised that that's the #1 answer. Our own happiness is what drives most of our decision making. But with the divorce rate hovering around 50% for first time marriages, and with the average marriage in America lasting only 8.2 years.

Marriage certainly doesn't seem to be making many of the people who engage in it happy. Which begs the question.

Should the blueprint for marriage really be based on our own personal happiness and fulfillment?

Or is there a deeper purpose for marriage and family that we may have overlooked or selectively ignored.

The Public Is Divided over the Value of Marriage for Society



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As you look into the data on marriage, what's clear is that there has been a sharp decline in America concerning the importance of marriage in our society

To highlight this truth, a few years ago PEW Research polled people and asked, is society better off if people get married?

46% said yes we are better off as a society if marriage and children are a priority.

But on the other side, 50% said that society is ***“Just as well off if people have other priorities.”***

In other words there are more people living in our society today that do not believe that marriage and family add significant value to society.



Why is marriage the pinnacle for everyone? People get married for the wrong reasons. We need to start looking at different packages, whether it's living together, or being with six partners, or dedicating your life to taking care of flowers.

— Sandra Bullock —

AZ QUOTES

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This is a BIG shift that is happening in our culture as we speak.

To further emphasize this point, here is a quote from world famous actress Sandra Bullock on her view of marriage.

Read:

Sandra is partially right, people do get married in many cases for the wrong reasons.

But the solution to that problem isn't a free for all, where you do whatever feels right at the moment be that cohabitation, polygamy, or being married to your flowers.

You see with this post-modern view of marriage, you can choose any path and it's ok. Because at the end of the day ***THE HAPPY MARRIAGE IS THE 'ME' MARRIAGE.*** Where it's all about ME.

The Happy Marriage Is the "Me" Marriage

The notion that the best marriages are those that bring satisfaction to the individual may seem counterintuitive. After all, isn't marriage supposed to be about putting the relationship first? Not anymore. For centuries, marriage was viewed as an economic and social institution, and the emotional and intellectual needs of the spouses were secondary to the survival of the marriage itself.

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Here is an excerpt for a New York Times article written by a columnist named Tara Parker Pope concerning how nowadays the Happy Marriage Is the "Me" Marriage.

Read:



But in modern relationships, people are looking for a partnership, and they want partners who make their lives more interesting . . . [who] help each of them attain valued goals. Marriage used to be a public institution for the common good, and now it is a private arrangement for the satisfaction of the individuals. Marriage used to be about *us*, but now it is about *me*.

Tara Parker-Pope

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Continue Reading:

And while Tara Parker Pope couldn't be more misguided she does bring up an interesting distinction.

Marriage used to be about US.....the family.....society.

But now it is all about ME.

To look at this from a historical perspective.....



Ok so here is a depiction of a marriage ceremony in the “old world,” is there anything you can see here that’s interesting? ***Shaking hands***

In the past marriage was primarily contractual between families. Love wasn’t primary, expectations were limited. You got married to fulfill a role in society, and if you ended up being happy in that contract, it was a bonus, not the aim.

The social order saw marriage as a benefit to all of society. Long term marriage was a fabric that held civilization together. Allowing children to thrive. And everybody knew this.

YOU MAKE ME
COMPLETE



In the 18th (and primarily) 19th centuries things began to change.

Instead of finding meaning through self-denial, giving up freedoms, and seeing great duty in marriage.

Marriage was redefined as the pursuit of emotional and sexual fulfillment, self-actualization.

Looking for someone to complete us!

But ironically, this newer view of marriage actually puts a crushing burden of expectation on marriage and on spouses in a way that more traditional understandings never did. Leaving us desperately trapped between both unrealistic longings *and* terrible fears about marriage.

YOU MAKE ME
COMPLETE



In other words our modern view of marriage has us holding out hope for the perfect person to complete us, **to sweep us off our feet, to always have dinner prepared at 6pm, to always say the perfect thing when we come home stressed from work, to always look a certain way, to always earn enough money**.....because again, we never say this out loud but most modern marriages are marriages of convenience where we are in it, as long as we are getting what we want out of it, as long as we are feeling completed.

But friends let me tell you that God has a very different view of marriage and family. And His vision of marriage invites us into something far bigger, far greater than merely serving ourselves.

Ephesians 5:31-33 (NIV)

³¹ “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” ³² This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

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Let's look at our scripture passage for today Ephesians 5:31-33

Read:

Here Paul goes back and quotes Genesis 2 to highlight the foundational nature of marriage. You see, at the climax of the Genesis account of creation we see God bringing a woman and man together to unite them in marriage. The Bible begins with a wedding! Think about that!

And here we see the pinnacle of human relationship in two becoming one flesh.

Now this isn't a contract, like the couple we saw shaking hands in the earlier slide, no this is to be a **covenant** between a man and a woman that would be a model for the relationship between Christ and the Church.

Ephesians 5:31-33 (NIV)

³¹ “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” ³² This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

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God’s irrevocable commitments to His people are called covenants. Throughout the Bible God makes and keeps these covenants with His people.

He doesn’t do this because we have earned it, in fact the Bible says that God has offered us His covenantal love in spite of the fact that we were His enemies.

But since God is a covenant keeping God, he expects us to keep our covenant with our spouse.

And you see Church when we understand the ONENESS that God is trying to produce in our marriages, we will hunger and thirst for His covenant promises in our marriages.

It will bring us true joy, and peace, and a happiness that serving ourselves could never come close to.

CONTRACT MARRIAGE**COVENANT MARRIAGE****Between 2 people****Between 3 people****I seek my best interest****I seek God's will for our best interest****We negotiate terms****We serve each other****I keep a record of performance****I keep no record of wrong****I punish failure****I forgive failure****The goal is winning****The goal is worshipping****A professional relationship****A personal relationship**

I want to compare and contrast the ***contract marriage*** (which is based on me getting what I want) vs. the ***covenant marriage*** (where God is getting what he desires out of your marriage).

Read:

Marriage & Family Blueprint #1

Marriage Is A Covenant

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Illus:

I am struck, as I reflect on the vows Kaely and I exchanged at our wedding, by the one-sidedness of our commitment. We actually wrote our vows ourselves.

There were no qualifiers or disclaimers. I promised to love Kaely for better or worse until death, regardless of her actions or attitude.

Likewise, Kaely promised to have me for richer or poorer, in sickness and health, for life, regardless of how well or poorly I behaved.

No doubt we both assumed we'd reciprocate in our love for each other. However, our vows said nothing about being loved back. By our words, each of us assumed 100 percent responsibility for the marriage. That's the nature of covenant. Each party makes an irrevocable vow.

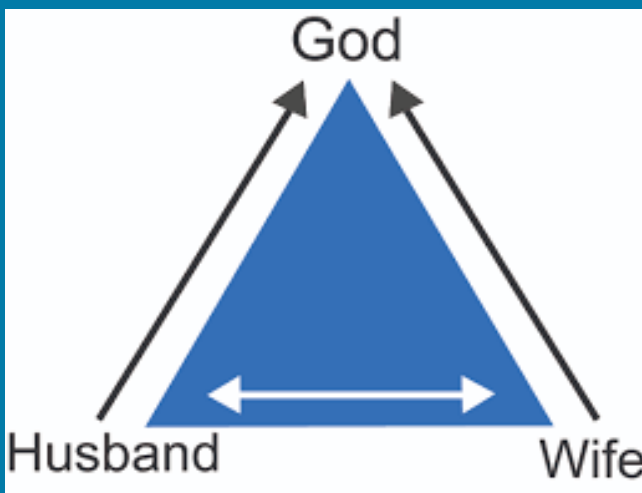
Marriage & Family Blueprint #1 **Marriage Is A Covenant**

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When a husband places the wedding ring on his wife's finger, in the traditional marriage service, he says, "With this ring I thee wed, with my body I thee worship, and with all my worldly goods I thee endow."

In other words, the husband gave everything he had to his wife, including his body and his earthly possessions. No longer were there his or her possessions. Everything was theirs. Why is this important? Because in giving our all, we actually gain what we want.

Oneness.



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Here is a visual depiction of what I am talking about.

In this triangle you have God at the top and husband and wife at the bottom/base.

As each couple grows towards God, they grow closer together also.

As they increase in their vertical relationship, their horizontal relationship improves....draws toward oneness.

This is why the most godly people we know often have great marriages. This is not a mistake.

Because you see as we learn to submit to The Father, we can much more easily submit to the covenant of marriage.

Ephesians 5:31-33 (NIV)

³¹ “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” ³² This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

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Back in verse 33 of our text.

Read: 

Here we are given specific instructions.

Husbands are told to love their wives because it is easy for husbands **not to do so**. Wives are told to respect their husbands because it is easy for wives **not to do so**.

We are called to do things that might not occur to us.

If we were already doing these things naturally, why even bring it up?

Ephesians 5:31-33 (NIV)

³¹ “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” ³² This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

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You see, in general, women are better at loving than men are. Men do well at respecting. C.S. Lewis once observed that women think of love as taking trouble for others — which is much closer to a scriptural *agape* love than what men naturally do. Men tend to think of love as not giving trouble to others.

So men must be *called* to sacrifice for their wives, to take trouble for them, as Christ gave himself for the church. Women must be urged to respect their husbands.

Often when a marriage is in a tough spot, both spouses tend to give what they feel **they need** — love and respect, respectively. Wives reach out to their husbands with love, when respect is what would really help. Husbands can back away, thinking of this as a form of respect, “giving space,” when what they need to do is lean in with love.

Marriage & Family Blueprint #2

Marriage Is Sustained Through Love and Respect

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And that brings us to Marriage Blueprint #2 – ***Marriage Is Sustained Through Love and Respect.***

Imagine with me for a moment if you asked the average couple on the street.....why they were getting married and instead of saying to make them happy they said, TO BE A MODEL OF THE COVENANT BETWEEN CHRIST AND THE CHURCH AND TO LOVE MY WIFE AS MYSELF.

If that was the perspective we would probably see something very different in our communities and in our homes.

Men you want to have a great marriage. Love your wife as Christ loved the church.

Women you want to have a great marriage. Respect your husband.

Marriage & Family Blueprint #2

Marriage Is Sustained Through Love and Respect

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Some of you are thinking.....but you don't understand my wife is hard to love, and others my husband is hard to respect. **I DON'T WANT TO SERVE THEM!**

It is true that having a heart of service toward our spouse can be difficult, especially when circumstances are challenging.

However through the Gospel of Jesus Christ we have an anchor which holds through every circumstance, through every trial. Jesus was well acquainted with **SERVICE**...let me read these scripture passages about how well our savior served us.



Mark 10:45 (ESV)

For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Philippians 2:5-8 (ESV)

⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

Matthew 23:11 (ESV)

11 The greatest among you shall be your servant.

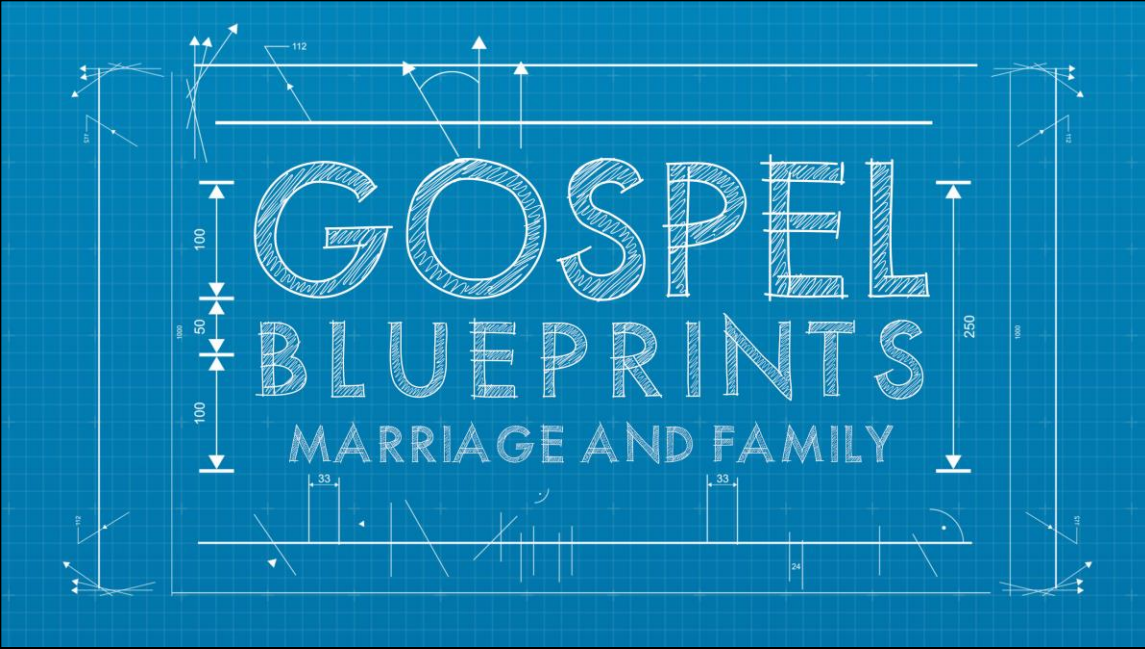
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Read:

Service was important to our savior Jesus Christ. It was he who said, NOT MY WILL BUT YOURS, FATHER.
(Luke 22)

Jesus hung on a cross, submitting himself to a death on a cross, a death he didn't deserve. He came and served us. It wasn't about HIM, and he was the SON OF GOD.

And so for us, Marriage isn't about us, but what it is about is an invitation to model Christlikeness.

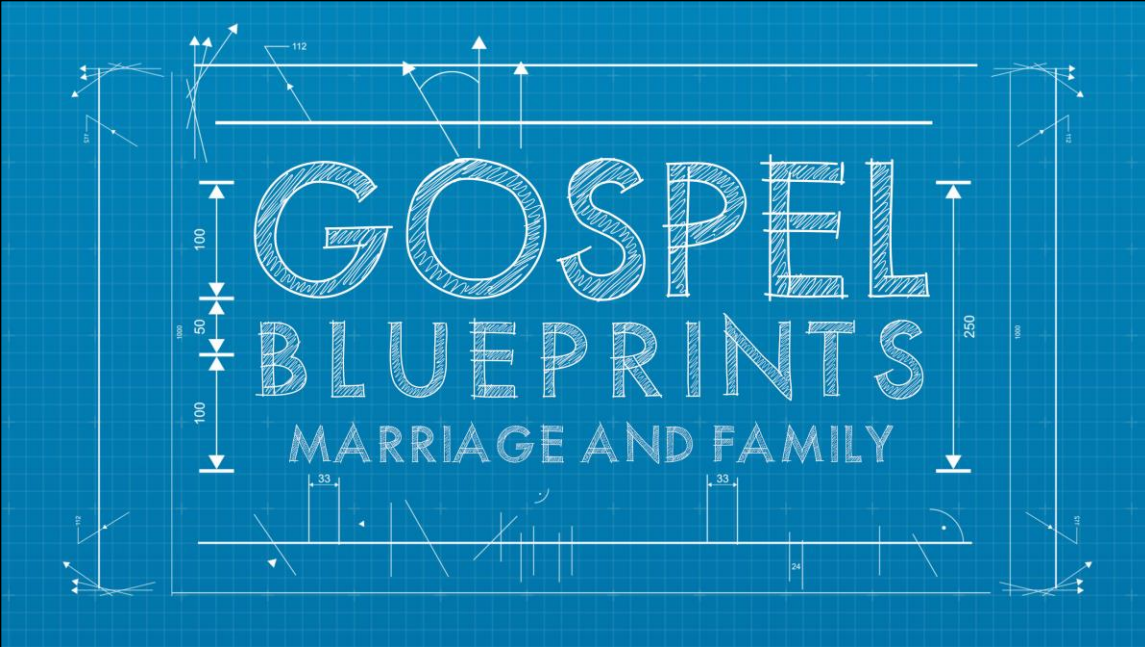


You see if we follow God's blueprint we will build safely. However if we do it the world's way it always ends in ruin.

Illus:

Do you know who holds the record for being married the most time? King Henry VIII (six times), film star Elizabeth Taylor (eight times), and TV actress Zsa Zsa Gabor (nine times) would be top candidates. However, little-known Glynn "Scotty" Wolfe would easily claim the title of the world's most married person by eclipsing all three combined.

Starting at age twenty-two, Wolfe married twenty-nine times. Some of the marriages ended in days, while other lasted years. What fueled his insatiable yearning to move on?



Those who have studied Wolfe from a psychological perspective suggest that as soon as he committed to a person, he experienced varying degrees of remorse. His marriage would experience bumps in the relational road, and he'd quickly start looking for other options.

How did his life end? Though he reportedly fathered over forty children, and many of his ex-spouses were still living, he died alone and penniless. His lifeless body--with a tattoo of a tied knot on his forearm--went unclaimed in the county morgue for months.

Glynn Wolfe spent his entire life trying to find someone to complete him...but he was working off of bad blueprints.

Ephesians 6:1-3 (NIV)

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² “Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise— ³ “so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

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Let's continue on and look at our last passage for this morning, Ephesians 6:1-3, here we see the blueprint for raising a family.

Read: 

What we see here is that ***Obedience*** and ***Honor*** are the blueprints for successful child raising.

Children are to be obedient to their parents.... Not only when they feel like it, not only when they agree, not only when there are worried about getting grounded for the 5th time that month.

Paul says that children are to obey their parents ‘in the Lord,’ which means that obedience to parents is part of a child’s obligation to Christ.

Ephesians 6:1-3 (NIV)

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² “Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise— ³ “so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

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What this means is that if you are a child and you can't stand listening to your parents...it's not your parents fault. God put them in charge! Take it up with Him!

This idea of children obeying their parents seems kind of obvious...duh...but at the same time we all know that this blueprint is NOT being followed in our society.

Spend about an hour in any Target store....and you will quickly see that the obedience blueprint is broken in our society.

I once saw a kid in Target who was crying because he wanted a toy. When he was told no, that he'd already chosen his 1 toy. He then proceeded to beat his mother in the head with the additional toy he wanted, as she calmly pleaded with him to stop.

Ephesians 6:1-3 (NIV)

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² “Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise— ³ “so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

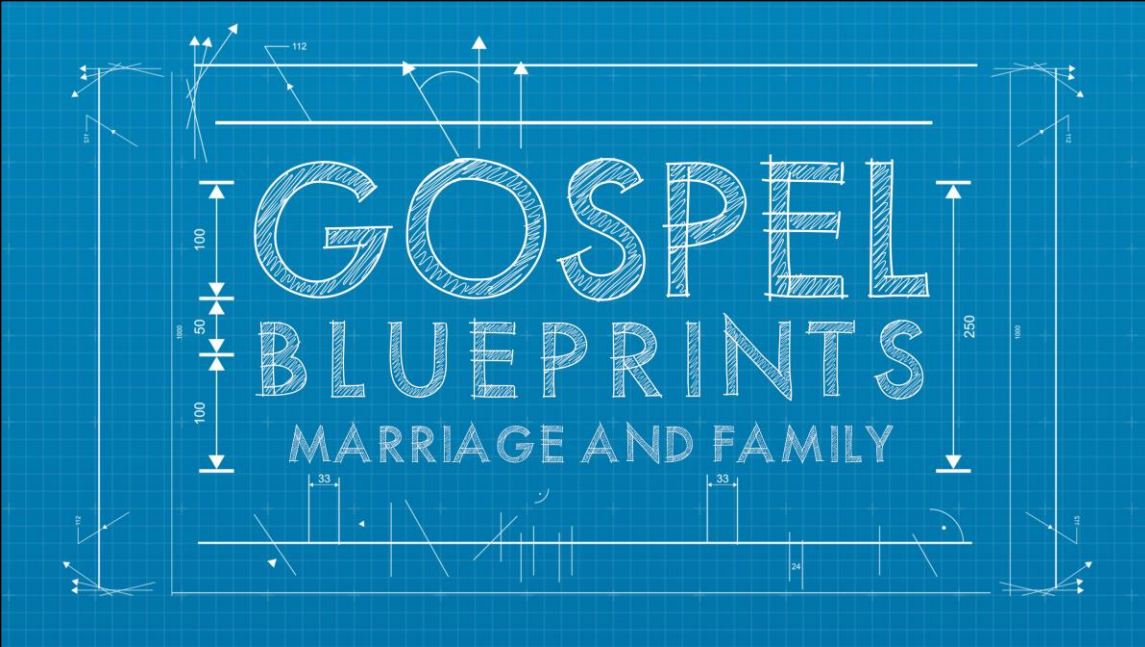
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Why is this happening? Because instead of parents raising their kids to be obedient, many have prioritized instead for their kids to be happy.

Now don't get me wrong. Kaely and I both want our children to be happy, but we realize that how they will achieve true joy is by following God's commands in their lives.

Think about it this way. If a child cannot obey their parents, how will they ever follow a Holy God?

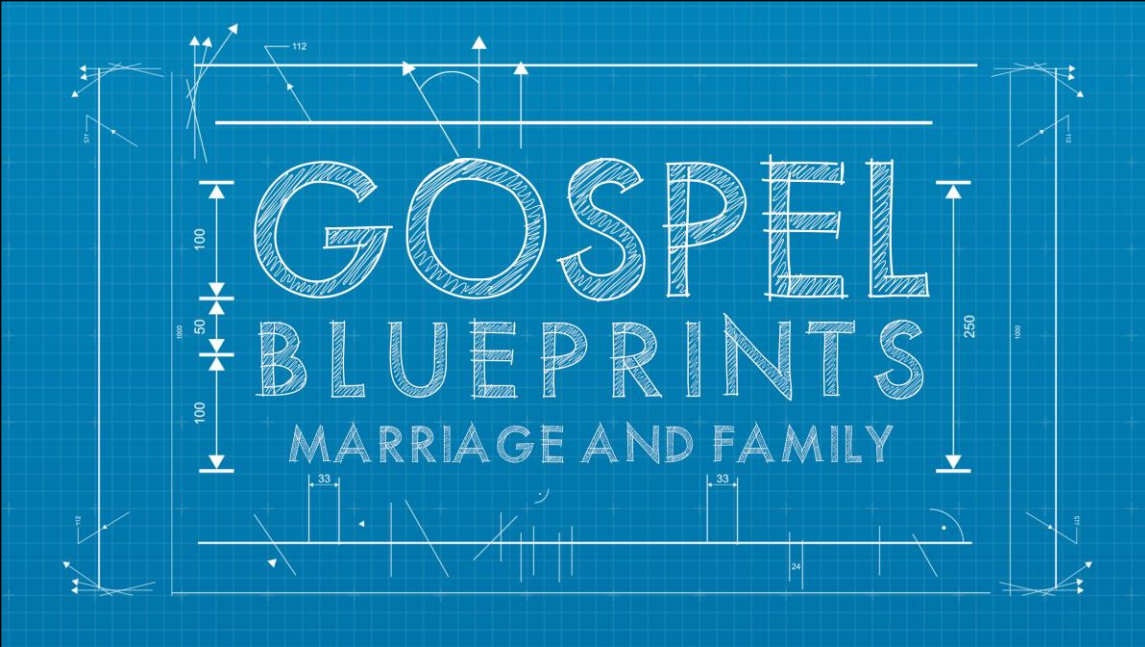
You see as we raise our children to value obedience and honor, we are preparing them for their future relationship with Jesus.



Now let's talk a little bit about **honor**. Honor *is an internal attitude of respect, courtesy, and reverence.* This command to honor parents is the first of the Ten Commandments, which is significant because God's Word is Consistent on this point throughout the entire Bible.

When God says, "Honor your father and your mother," he is also saying, *Will you trust and submit to me?* — to my wise, sovereign, and specific plan for you, however hard that plan feels along the way? Because the reality is Psalm 139:13 tells us that God chose our mother's womb as our first home, and then wove pieces of our parents together into a whole new person that is YOU and I. THINK ABOUT THAT!

[Pause]



Along with this command to honor is a specific promise of blessing attached to it. And that is the blessing of longevity.

When we think about lives that are marked by “lack of obedience” and “dishonor” we often think of people who lead rebellious, reckless lives. And that is no model to follow, because a life of rebellion often leads to disaster.

And what Ephesians 6:1-3 is trying to exhort us to as children/parents is to model our family off of God’s blueprint.

Marriage & Family Blueprint #3

Family thrives on obedience and honor

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And that brings us to Marriage and Family Blueprint #3.
Family thrives on obedience and honor.

You know this topic of honoring your parent's is so huge there is so much that could be said, that I want to give 4 practical things we all can do (if our parents are still living) to honor them.

How to Honor Your Parents

#1 – FORGIVE THEM

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FORGIVE THEM

Perhaps the most important way we can honor our parents is to forgive them. The fact is, there are no perfect parents. All parents have fallen far short of their children's expectations and, in all likelihood, even their own expectations. Our parents have sinned against us. They have made unwise decisions, they have had unrealistic expectations, they have said and done things that have left us wounded. And for that reason, many children enter adulthood controlled by anger and bitterness. They find themselves unable to move past their parents' mistakes or their parents' sin.

We honor our parents by extending grace and forgiveness to them. And this is actually possible, because we serve and imitate a forgiving Savior Jesus.

How to Honor Your Parents

#1 – FORGIVE THEM

GOSPEL
BLUEPRINTS

FORGIVE THEM

No doubt some of us here today have a parent who needs our forgiveness.

They may not deserve it, but the truth is we do not deserve the forgiveness we have been granted in Christ Jesus.

How to Honor Your Parents

#2 – SPEAK WELL OF THEM

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SPEAK WELL OF THEM

Another way we can honor our parents is to speak well of them, to refuse to speak evil of them.

We live at a world where it is even considered noble to air our grievances, when it is considered therapeutic to air our dirty laundry. We think little of telling the world exactly what we think of our politicians, our bosses, our parents.

And yet scripture warns us that our words have the power to extend honor or dishonor.

How to Honor Your Parents

#3 – SEEK THEIR WISDOM

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SEEK THEIR WISDOM

We honor our parents when we seek their wisdom through life's ups and downs. You know the Bible constantly associates youth with folly and age with wisdom and tells us that those who have lived longer lives have generally accumulated greater wisdom.

Therefore it makes a lot of sense to lean on our parents for understanding, to seek their input when faced with major decisions. It honors our parents when we seek their help.

How to Honor Your Parents

#4 – SUPPORT THEM

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BLUEPRINTS

SUPPORT THEM

We can also honor our parents by supporting them. We honor our parents by giving them the assurance that we will not forsake them in their old age. Just as they cared for us, we will care for them. This is our responsibility and it ought to be our joy.

At a time when millions of elderly adults are living alone, consigned to nursing homes and hospitals, cared for by professionals rather than family members, Christians have the opportunity to display special honor.

[Pause]



Speaking of special honor, we are going to close out our time this morning by watching a brief testimony of a couple whose marriage and family are built on honor **all** by the power of Jesus Christ.

As you watch this testimony think about the blueprint that made this story possible.

Play Video:



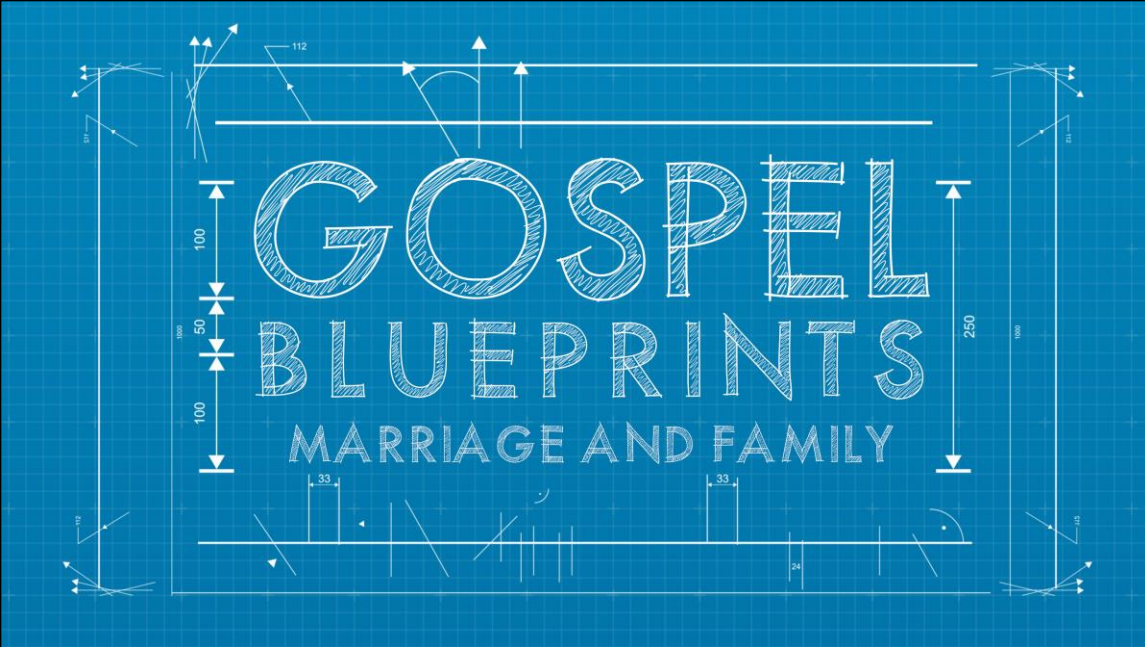
What a testimony.

What a blueprint to follow.

How to finish the race well.

I want to reemphasize what Bill said here, as it is so powerful. He said, “I am determined to care for her every need. Because you see God has loved us so unconditionally. And I understand that God has put his love in my heart. And because I realize how much God has love me. I too can love my lovely wife.”

Bill took the Gospel, he applied it to his marriage, and even though his circumstances aren't great, he has JOY, because God is greater than our circumstances.



Church family, your marriage and family is currently following some sort of blueprint right now as we speak.

Is the master architect our culture, your friends at work, following neighbors, going off of your gut instinct etc?

Or do you want to really go for it and have the exceptional marriage and family God desires you to have?



On November 5-6 we will be hosting here at Brandywine the Created for Connection Marriage Workshop. This will be an excellent opportunity for couples to work on their most important human relationship.

Dave Weidis is an in demand Marriage Counselor who will be running this workshop with his excellent team.

There are still spots available sign up today!

Pray