Family Lessons 1: The Permanence of Marriage

I. Introduction
   a. Marriage in our society
      i. Marriages are failing
         1. Over 1 Million divorces every year in the US
         2. A fast growing trend to not get married in the first place – nearly 7.6 million couples living together outside of marriage, over 14 times the number 35 years ago SOOU 2012
         3. One in four children live with only one parent – a number that has doubled in the past 35 years
         4. Source SOOU 2012
         5. 53% of births in US today are to unwed mothers [SOOU 2012]
   b. What does God think of it?

II. Key Thought: God has always intended marriage to be a permanent relationship

III. The Beginning – Gen. 2:18-25
   a. The source of marriage – God
      i. He invented it
      ii. He knows how it works
   b. The components of marriage
      i. One man
      ii. One woman
      iii. God
   c. The purpose of marriage –
      i. provide
         1. companionship & love
         2. life-long intimacy
         3. Mutual support and help
         4. Raise children (Mal. 2)
      ii. These could not be provided to man in his solitary state or by any other created being
   d. The permanence of marriage –
      i. A closer relationship than even parent and child
      ii. One flesh cannot be divided
         1. Joined - "to cling, cleave, keep close." Used in modern Hebrew in the sense of "to stick to, adhere to," dabaq yields the noun form for "glue" and also the more abstract ideas of "loyalty, devotion."

IV. The Decline of Marriage
   a. Sin and its consequences – Gen 3:15-17
      i. Polygamy and concubinage – Abraham (Gen. 16), Jacob (Gen. 29-30)
      ii. Divorce – Abraham (Gen. 21)
iii. Promiscuity – Dinah (Gen 34), Reuben (Gen. 35:22), Judah (Gen. 38), Joseph (Gen. 39)

iv. And these were the people of God! Imagine what the rest of humanity was doing!

b. The Law of Moses

i. The law was added because of transgressions (Gal 3:19)
   1. Boundaries were placed
   2. To prevent God’s people from becoming more and more wicked
   3. It could not prevent or cure sin
   4. It put a floor below which an individual could not sink without being cut off from Israelite society
   5. As long as the law was respected, the nation as a whole was morally upheld

ii. Constraints on marriage:
   1. They could not marry the Canaanite nations (Deut 7)
   2. A Levite could not marry a woman who was not a virgin and an Israelite (Lev. 21)
   3. A Husband could not marry his previously divorced wife (Deut. 24)
   4. Man could not marry a woman who had been married to a relative (Lev. 20)
   5. Women with property could only marry a man from her own tribe (Num. 36)

iii. Constraints on divorce
   1. Some could not be divorced (Deu. 22)
      a. A man who had lain with a woman before he married her
      b. A man who had falsely accused his wife of unfaithfulness
   2. All divorces had to meet certain standards (Deu. 24)
      a. Must be for a cause
      b. A writing of divorcement
      c. The divorced wife was free to marry another

iv. Constraints on polygamy and promiscuity

c. God’s view of His law
   i. Adultery was a capital crime – Lev. 20:10
   ii. Divorce is treachery – Malachi 2
      1. It covers God’s altar with tears – from the abandoned, neglected and impoverished wife and children
      2. They were one because God joined them together
      3. Now they had divorced their wives
      4. The purpose of that union was to produce godly children
      5. Their treachery was the same as violence against the wife and children
      6. God hated it!
V. The Restoration of Marriage in Christ’s Law
   a. Christ’s Law (Matt. 5:32; 19:1ff)
      i. Restored God’s original plan for marriage
      ii. Male and Female
      iii. No divorce
      iv. One exception
      v. Violation results in adultery
      vi. Bond ends at death – Rom 7
   b. Paul in Corinthians (1 Cor. 7)
   c. Can Christ’s law on Marriage be Understood?
      1. Seating Chart Rule
         a. Without exceptions
            i. Compare with Lk. 16:18
         b. With exceptions
            i. Can’t see board
            ii. Malfunctioning Desk
            iii. Bad behavior
            iv. Compare with Matt. 19:9
               1. There is only one case in which God gives permission for divorce and remarriage
               2. In the case of sexual immorality
            c. If a 3rd grader can understand the seating chart rule, an adult can understand Christ’s Marriage Rule
            d. EXAMPLE: Someone not a Christian
               i. Having a conversion study
               ii. Let us know they were getting married
               iii. Fiancee had been married six times before
               iv. Had this person read Matthew 19:9
               v. The first thing they said after reading it was
                  1. “If I get married, I’ll still be sinning!”
                  2. Can the law of Christ on marriage be understood
                  3. Yes, you have to work hard to misunderstand it
                     a. Even if you are in an unscriptural marriage or contemplating one you can understand it
                     b. It was given by a God who wants what is best for all mankind
                     c. And who knows how to communicate with human
b. How serious is it? Those who commit adultery
   i. Forfeit fellowship with the church (1 Cor 5)
   ii. Forfeit the kingdom of heaven (1 Cor. 6)
   iii. Do something God hates (Mal 2)
   iv. It covered one’s garments with violence:
       1. A single or divorced woman is 50% more likely to die from any cause than a married woman [TCFM]
       2. A couple’s divorce reduces the lifespan of their children by an average of 4 years [TCFM]
       3. Swedish children being raised by single or divorced parents are “twice as likely to suffer from psychiatric disorders, diseases, suicide attempts, alcoholism, and drug abuse” [CR]
       4. In the US, children of divorce are more than twice as likely to have serious social, emotional, or psychological problems as children of intact families—25% versus 10% [AMPB]
       5. Children whose parents live apart, the authors find, are twice as likely to drop out of high school as those in two-parent families, one and a half times as likely to be idle in young adulthood, twice as likely to become single parents themselves. [GUWSP]
       6. The State of the Nation Report in Britain, published in 2006, found that 70 percent of young offenders come from lone-parent families, and children who had grown up in lone-parent or broken families were between three to six times more likely to have suffered abuse. [CR]

c. Reducing Divorce
   i. Nearly Half of all marriages end in divorce in our country, but these divorces are NOT EVENLY SPREAD ACROSS ALL MARRIAGES!
   ii. Some groups have MUCH LESS DIVORCE than the general population
   iii. “one upside of generations of widespread divorce is that we’ve now learned a lot about what makes a marriage succeed.” SOOU 2012
   iv. Notice three of the critical factors to reducing divorce involve doing it God’s way!
   v. Top two ways parents can prevent divorce in their children:
      1. Raise them in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord:
         a. Teach them about God’s law that sex belongs within marriage, and you will have eliminated half their risk of divorce
         b. Teach them that God comes first in their life, and you will most of the rest of the risk
      2. Honor God’s law on the permanence of marriage
         a. Not breaking up the home where your children live through divorce or separation
b. And you will virtually eliminate the risk of divorce for your children

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Percent Decrease</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual income over $50,000 (vs. under $25,000)</td>
<td>–30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduated college (vs. high-school dropout)</td>
<td>–25</td>
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<td>Having a baby seven months or more after marriage (vs. before marriage)</td>
<td>–24</td>
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<td>Marrying over 25 years of age (vs. under 18)</td>
<td>–24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Own family of origin intact (vs. divorced parents)</td>
<td>–14</td>
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<td>Religious affiliation (vs. none)</td>
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Source: [SOOU 2012]

VI. Conclusions
   a. Preview Series
      i. The husband’s role
      ii. The wife’s role
      iii. The Blessed and Blessing Home
      iv. The God-Centered Home
      v. The Parent-Lead Home
      vi. The Child-Rearing Home
      vii. The Overflowing Home

VII. Invitation:
   a. God’s Way is the Best Way
      i. In Marriage
         1. He tells us the right way
         2. All we have to do is follow it
      ii. In Life
         1. It’s the Same
   b. My Story
      i. Divorce
      ii. Worry: can I be a good husband and father?
      iii. The Answer: YES, God tells us how and shows us how
   c. 

VIII. Sources: