

## Trying to Make Marriage Work the Wrong Way

### Introduction:

1. Most people enter marriage with very lofty expectations. Yet, most couples end up very disappointed and frustrated in their marriage.
  - The divorce rate is around 50%.
  - This does not include the people who have stayed married, but are miserable.
  - What would be the statistic of people who are really, truly happy in their marriage and completely fulfilled? 5%, maybe 2%?
2. What is the problem in marriages today? Generations of relational "experts" have come and gone, yet marriages continue to suffer.
3. The root problem is that couples have attempted to build their marriage on an entirely faulty premise.
  - A bad foundation leads to a shaky building. **Matthew 7:24-27**
4. The only foundation that will work in marriage is a foundation that is constructed according to God's Word.
5. Tonight, we will examine two faulty premises that many marriages have been built upon and then look at the biblical alternative.

### First faulty premise - the roleless marriage

1. What do I mean by this? What is the philosophy of the roleless marriage?
  - Couples strive to achieve equality in their relationship by equally sharing all responsibilities, duties, and privileges.
  - You both pursue careers of your choice.
  - Parenting - you share equally the duties involved (feeding, diapers, bedtime stories, baths, etc.)
  - Household chores you split 50/50.
  - In decision making, you both have a say and nobody has the final decision.
  - Finances - it is his and hers.
2. Here is the problem. Many couples confuse equality with sameness. The idea of a husband and wife each having separate and distinct roles is repudiated.
3. In the roleless marriage, husband and wife have identical roles and they simply share the duties that come with those roles.
4. Why won't the roleless marriage work?
  - First, it makes little sense organizationally.
    - God is a God of order and structure. **1 Corinthians 14:40; Colossians 2:5; Titus 1:5**
    - Satan loves chaos and disorganization. He is the author of confusion. He loves the roleless marriage because he knows it is an organizational nightmare and disaster.
    - The roleless marriage is a recipe for envying, strife, and confusion. **James 3:16**
  - Second, it contradicts the plain teaching of the Bible.
    - The Bible is very clear about how marriage should be organized. It points to distinct roles. We will talk more about this later.

- Instead of diminishing gender distinctions or blending them, the Bible insists on them. **Genesis 1:27**
- Genesis 2 goes on to describe in detail the creation of Eve as both the complement to Adam and as the final completion in creation.
- Maleness and femaleness mean something very important in the Bible, something non-negotiable. There is no notion of a unisex, roleless marriage in God's Word.

### **Second faulty premise - the traditional marriage**

1. What is the philosophy of the traditional marriage?
  - It is the "Leave it to Beaver" model.
  - The father works long hours, while the mother stays home and cares for the home and children.
  - Many have assumed that the traditional marriage model is the biblical form of marriage.
  - It is a return to the good old days of the 1950's and 1960's.
2. But what was the traditional family really like? Frankly, it had major structural flaws. It looked appealing on TV, but it wasn't reality.
3. What are the problems with the traditional marriage and family?
  - Absentee fathers - **Ephesians 6:4**
    - Dad was conspicuously absent. It became normal and even expected for a man to park his family in a suburb home and indulge himself in the city earning a living.
  - Devalued women - women were neither esteemed nor challenged.
  - Mutual tolerance - there was a basic misuse of the institution of marriage itself.
    - Too often, the marriage became nothing more than a contract that kept two people together in a legal and financial partnership.

### **What is the biblical alternative?**

1. There is an alternative to offer and it is one that will meet our heart's desire for love, trust, fairness, and mutual fulfillment. It is found in the Bible.
2. The Bible stresses the importance of roles in marriage.
  - A role is the essential function that God has designed a man or woman to fulfill in a marriage relationship.
  - While these roles differ, it does not mean that one is superior and one is inferior. Both are of equal value and importance.
  - As far as Scripture is concerned, roles address one's responsibility, not one's rank.
3. God created man and woman, not to have the same functions, but to have complementary functions. Each partner must fulfill his or her God-given role.
  - In a Biblical marriage, the husband's role revolves around leadership, the kind of leadership Jesus described in **Luke 22:24-26**.
    - It focuses on responsibility, not privilege; service, not being served; support, not superiority.

- What about the wife? What is her role in the marriage? Many present the wife's role in terms of submission, but a wife's role revolves around helping, loving, nurturing, and supporting.
4. We will study all of these issues in detail as we go through the series.

**In Conclusion:**

1. God created two different genders, male and female, to fulfill two different roles.
2. The two functions are unique, but both are critical to the success of a family.
3. So many times, men know how to exploit or intimidate, but they don't know how to lead.
4. So many times women don't know how to nurture. It is an act they have never seen. Having children scares them. Managing a home and children seems foreign and alien, maybe even repulsive.
5. Many wives have buried their instincts of nurturing. They had to in order to protect themselves and their children. They don't want to depend on exploitative men who use them, abuse them, and abandon them.
  - The result is that we see fear increasing and intimacy is decreasing.
6. There will be no reversal of these trends until men begin to lead as God intended. When they do, women will feel the freedom to do what is instinctive within them, and that is to nurture, love, help, and support.