Introduction: The American Family

1. Our heart’s desire – 97% want a close-knit family.

2. Our current situation: Families are disintegrating.

3. The Christian family is in demise.

4. The primary cause: Our failure to hold marriage and marriage commitments in high esteem.

God’s instructions for a great marriage

22Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. 24But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. 25Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; 26that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless. 28So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; 29for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, 30because we are members of His body. 31For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. 32This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. 33Nevertheless let each individual among you also love his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see to it that she respect her husband.

Ephesians 5:22-33 (NIV)
1. It requires mutual ________________ to God and each other.

   …and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

   Ephesians 5:21 (NIV)

2. You need to know how to ________________ your mate.

3. Your marriage has an even bigger ________________ than your happiness.

God’s design for marriage: “The Blueprint”

[Diagram showing the relationship between God, Man, and Woman, highlighting God’s role in the marriage]

Genesis 2:24
Marriage is a holy covenant

A covenant: An agreement and guarantee one person makes with another.

- The Hebrew word for covenant used in the Old Testament comes from the verb “to cut”.

- We see in the Bible that God made very serious agreements where He established a “covenant” which represents a serious occasion which the parties involved seal their promises in the midst of “cutting” which generally involved blood.

- Examples:

  - Noah: Genesis 9:1-17
  - Abraham: Genesis 17:3-8
  - Moses: Exodus 34
  - Jesus: Mark 14:24 & Hebrews 7:22

- The Bible itself is divided into two sections called the Old Testament and the New Testament. The word “testament” is interchangeable with the word “covenant”. So when Jesus died on the cross and shed His blood, a new covenant was established which was different then the Old Testament. This is why we see in the Bible where marriage is a “covenant” - it is a very serious thing in the sight of God (Malachi 2:14).

Definition: Marriage is an ________________ commitment of unconditional love toward an ________________ person.

A covenant marriage involves three distinct aspects:

1. Leaving
2. Cleaving
3. Becoming “one flesh”
Since marriage is a covenant and not merely a contract...

1. __________________________ is not an option. Malachi 2:14

2. __________________________ is a serious covenant breaking offense. Proverbs 2:16-19

3. _______ before _____________ is a violation of this holy covenant. Hebrews 13:4

4. ___________ __________ relationships are forbidden as a violation of God’s design.

1 Corinthians 6:9; Romans 1:26-27

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**Marriage that Works**

**Personal Commitment – Week 1**

From this day forward...
- I will refuse to consider divorce as an option.
- I will take seriously my covenant relationship with my mate before God.

For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

Genesis 2:24 (NIV)

Beginning with me...
- I realize I need God’s forgiveness for violating His covenant plan for marriage.
- I receive God’s complete forgiveness for my sin based on Christ’s death for me.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:9 (NIV)

I commit to pray for...
- My marriage/future marriage
- My children’s marriage
- A marriage that is in crisis

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Signed ___________________________ Date ___________________________