

# The Misconceptions about Marriage

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Part of our problem with marriage is our misunderstanding of the nature and purpose of marriage itself. Most of these misconceptions are the result of cultural falsehoods that have been told so often, most of us believe them to be true. Those that are not outright lies are only partial truths. So let's look at a few of these misconceptions and learn why they are wrong.

## *2.1. Misconception One: Marriage is two people who fall in love.*

Hopefully, this is true, but it is not necessary; true, lasting love develops over time, it does not just happen.

If a couple marries because they fell in love, what will happen if they fall out of love, even for a short while? Romantic affection is not sufficiently stable to be the platform upon which a couple would build a lifetime relationship.

Romantic affection, however, must be nurtured throughout a marriage to make that marriage a pleasure. Notice two passages in the Song of Solomon which demonstrate the commitment to keep romance in the relationship:<sup>1</sup>

Song of Solomon 4:1-6:

- 1 Behold, you are fair, my love! Behold, you are fair! You have dove's eyes behind your veil. Your hair is like a flock of goats, going down from Mount Gilead.
- 2 Your teeth are like a flock of shorn sheep which have come up from the washing, every one of which bears twins, and none is barren among them.
- 3 Your lips are like a strand of scarlet, and your mouth is lovely. Your temples behind your veil are like a piece of pomegranate.
- 4 Your neck is like the tower of David, built for an armory, on which hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men.
- 5 Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle, which feed among the lilies.
- 6 Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, I will go my way to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense.

Song of Solomon 5:2-8:

- 2 I sleep, but my heart is awake; it is the voice of my beloved! He knocks, saying, "Open for me, my sister, my love, my dove, my perfect one; for my head is covered with dew, my locks with the drops of the night."
- 3 I have taken off my robe; how can I put it on again? I have washed my feet; how can I defile them?
- 4 My beloved put his hand by the latch of the door, and my heart yearned for him.

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<sup>1</sup> All Bible references are from the *New King James Version*.

- 5 I arose to open for my beloved, and my hands dripped with myrrh, my fingers with liquid myrrh, on the handles of the lock.
- 6 I opened for my beloved, but my beloved had turned away and was gone. My heart leaped up when he spoke. I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer.
- 7 The watchmen who went about the city found me. They struck me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took my veil away from me.
- 8 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, that you tell him I am lovesick!

The man was all ready of an evening of romance and sex and she had just put her hair up in rollers and wasn't having it. Here is a couple who loved each other deeply but allowed the carelessness of boring routine and selfishness to cool off their love for each other. Notice that they were able to restore their relationship later. Solomon and the Shulamite built their marriage on sterner commitments than romance alone.

The problem we face is we usually fall in love so effortlessly. That is understandable in our culture in which we are inundated with celebrity love affairs that are shallower than a Texas lake. We assume that remaining in love is also effortless. It's not!

## *2.2. Misconception Two: If you have sex with another person, in God's eyes you are married.*

In one sense, this is not actually a misconception, it is a fact. The misconception is the result of believing that sex is all that is necessary for the foundation of a successful and fulfilling relationship.

This misconception does, unfortunately, establish a marriage bond. For this reason, if for no other, adultery is considered such a heinous sin against God, society, and the sanctity of one's marriage vows.

1st Corinthians 6:16 Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For "the two," He says, "shall become one flesh."

Although it does establish a marriage bond, it does so through fornication, which is a sin. This immoral quandary is the damage an affair makes to a marriage relationship.

## *2.3. Misconception Three: If you do not have sex, you are not really married.*

Many denominations would allow annulment if the marriage was not sexually consummated. This allowance by religious decree does not mean that God is satisfied with the annulment. Scripture does not directly deal with the issue of sexual non-consummation; the assumption made in Scripture is that marriage initiates, in part, the propriety of sexual satisfaction.

Another point in this discussion is the case of the paraplegic or quadriplegic who marries yet is

unable to have sex. Is that marriage a non-marriage in the eyes of God, or does it have God's blessing in spite of any hindrances to sexual consummation? If God establishes the marriage on the basis of vows, then sexual consummation is not mandatory to establish a one-flesh relationship.

## *2.4. Misconception Four: It is necessary to have a marriage license and a ceremony to be married.*

In some societies (e.g., tribal and other primitive societies), there is no civil government that has the facility for or the capability of establishing records of marriages.

In our society, the government requires a license; since the government requires it, and the Lord requires us to obey civil authorities (see Romans 13:1-2), therefore, Christians in this country must have a marriage license to have a God-blessed marriage.

Romans 13:1-2:

- 1 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.
- 2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. NKJV

Although all of the above are, in some ways and at times true, they do not define marriage: each statement is defective, because incomplete.

The problem is that most people hold to but one of these misconceptions, at least in part, and consider it the true definition; therefore, when their marriage stops fitting their definition, they look for a way out of that marriage: That exit is usually divorce.

We must determine the true nature of marriage to understand our responsibilities and privileges as husbands and wives.