



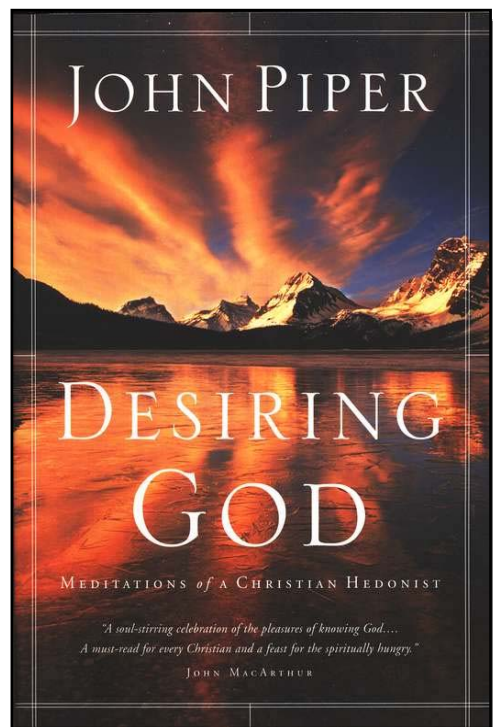
DEAN WELCH – TEACHER

taking the **1** out of **MARRIAGE**

WEEKLY SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

MAY 23, 2010

LESSON #8 FROM THE *MASTERWORK* SERIES STUDY OF:



taking the 1 out of MARRIAGE

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Today, we're talking about marriage which is rooted in a **love** relationship. Now, when we talk about love, we have to be careful not to confuse what that term means. The kind of love that is required for a solid Christian marriage is not like the love I heard about recently when a woman accompanied her husband to the doctor's office. After his checkup, the doctor called the wife into his office alone. He said, "Your husband is suffering from a very serious stress disorder. If you don't do the following your husband will surely die." "Each morning, fix him a healthy breakfast. Be pleasant at all times. For lunch make him a nutritious meal. For dinner prepare an especially nice meal for him. Don't burden him with chores. Don't discuss your problems with him—it will only make his stress worse. No nagging. And most importantly, make love with your husband several times a week. If you can do this for the next ten to twelve months, I think your husband will regain his health completely." On the way home, the husband asked his wife, "What did the doctor say?" "He said you're going to die," she replied.

As we near the end of our 9-week study from John Piper's *Desiring God*, today concludes Week Eight about our *delighting in God* through marriage. So, as we start, will someone repeat our memory verse from **PSALM 37:4 (NIV)**? "*Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.*" It's all about **delight and joy**, so will someone share a moment when you found **JOY** in God this week? Now, as we've done each week, let's look at the flip side and get someone to share one thing that **KEPT YOU FROM JOY** in God this week?

To put this in perspective in connection with *our delighting in the Lord* in our marriages, turn to **Genesis 2:24**: "*For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.*" WOW! Do you see what

happens? Somehow a mystical "union" takes place in which we mysteriously become "one flesh" before God. No other human relationship can come close to that - NONE. So, what's next? We've come a long way with the answer since Genesis, but before we can begin to understand what Paul writes in our texts this week, we have to understand the context in which this was written. The Jews to whom Paul writes held a very low value of women and of marriage. In his morning prayer there was a sentence in which a Jewish man gave thanks that God had not made him "a Gentile, a slave or a woman." In Jewish law a woman was not a person, but a thing. She had no legal rights whatsoever; she was absolutely her husband's possession to do with as he willed.

The law of divorce for Jews is summarized in **Deuteronomy 24:1**. *"When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favour in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, he writes her a bill of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house."* Obviously everything turns on the interpretation of some indecency.

Earlier this week I emailed you a thought question to consider, pray about and answer for today's lesson. In case you didn't get my email, let me read it so you can think about it for a few minutes: *"Standing at the altar we all had a picture of what our marriage would look like. We are filled with wishes, dreams and desires! The problem is that these wishes, dreams and desires become **EXPECTATIONS** that we unload on our spouse over the years. So, as you study God's Word and pray through our lesson this week, I challenge you to answer this question this week during your study and prayer time: **WHAT DOES MY SPOUSE OWE ME?**"* Before we answer that, I want you to watch this rather humorous video clip about a man who wants to give his spouse a much needed "night off" by grilling a couple of steaks. [PLAY YOUTUBE CLIP: [HTTP://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=US6DBIOPGZI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=US6DBIOPGZI)]

Notice the title on the board—*taking the CAPITAL "I" out of marriage*. **What do you think that means?** We know it's a

challenge to keep marriage alive, don't we—much less to *delight* in the LORD in most marriages? Dr. Charles Swindoll tells the story of little four-year-old Susie who, at school one day, heard for the first time the story of Snow White and the 7 Dwarfs. Susie sat in rapt attention as she heard about the wicked witch, the poisonous apple, Snow White eating the apple, Prince Charming coming along, kissing Snow White, loving her and charming her. Little Susie couldn't wait to get home and tell her mother the story, but she didn't tell her mother the ending. Her mother asked, "And, Susie, do you know what happened then. They lived happily ever after." Little Susie, looked back at her mother, and said, Oh no, mother, they got married!"

In such childlike innocence she made her response—now that's real life—and it's not the same. Marriage is a tough assignment. We need all the help we can get. Two people coming together with sinful natures, living in a sinful world - a hard place. When the fun and games have passed, the glow of the honeymoon is over, disease takes its toll, death of a child, family turns against you.... what then?

There's a great series by Andy Stanley called "*iMARRIAGE.*" Admittedly, many of the thoughts and ideas for this week's lesson come from him—a great communicator for God! I've got two boxes up front this morning to help us visualize and understand what we're talking about. In one box, which I have labeled as DESIRES, I want you to think about all the wishes, dreams and desires that we start out with before and up to the marriage. [LIST ITEMS IN BOX: HOUSE, MONEY, DIAPERS, DUSTER, FANCY CAR, "UGLY" ROBE, ETC] Now, as long as these remain wishes, dreams and desires and nothing more—everything's fine. The problem, however, is that sometime after the marriage ceremony our wishes, dreams and desires move from the DESIRE box over into this other box—EXPECTATIONS.

When marriage moves from wishes, dreams and desires to expectations, we expect our spouse to do certain things. We

move from trying to help each other accomplish these wishes, dreams and desires over to a relationship that is closer to a DEBT & DEBTOR RELATIONSHIP. You know, *"You owe me!"* We talked about doing so and so in the first year, or taking a vacation every year after blank—and on and on. You know, you're the husband and husbands do certain things. Wives do certain things. What started out as a covenant becomes a contract. Some of the romance fades and what started out as unconditional becomes very conditional.

And you find yourself locked in this tension and it seems almost impossible to solve. And there are good times and pleasant times and happy times, but basically you have these two big CAPITAL "I's" battling it out and basically trying to manage EXPECTATIONS. Imagine a marriage where everything got taken out of the Expectation Box and put back into the wish, dream and desire box? Imagine a marriage where your spouse was constantly trying to figure out what's in YOUR wishes, dreams and desire box and then doing everything in his or her power to fulfill your wishes, dreams and desires. And imagine coming home every day and functioning in a marriage where you didn't feel the burden of expectation—the burden of trying to live up to a standard that you never can quite live up to. All of a sudden, all of that was gone. Imagine a marriage with the expectation box empty.

As the result of our lesson this week, and your Bible study, I pray that you now understand that you must instead learn to transform your expectations and look to God if we are to experience marriage as it was designed. And transitioning things from here (EXPECTATION BOX) back to here (DESIRE BOX) hinges on the answer to the question I emailed you earlier this week and that we talked about initially. It's a very important question: WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE YOUR SPOUSE OWES YOU?

What does your spouse owe you—because your answer to that question tell you what's in THERE? (Expectations) And what is IN

THERE is what impedes your progress moving to a relationship that's all about fulfilling and satisfying the desires of the person you married as opposed to living up to expectations and expecting them to live up to yours. You cannot *delight yourself in the LORD* unless you get this right.

The answer to the question about what does my spouse owe me, is **NOTHING**. They owe you nothing! Now, you may say, well where are you getting this from? Turn to **EPHESIANS 5** in your Bible and let's look at a few verses, starting in **verse 21**. In these verses, here's what the Apostle Paul says—and by the way, this concept isn't just here in Ephesians, it starts back in Genesis—it's all throughout the Bible. The only books that it is not in may be some of the Old Testament levitical law. But throughout the Bible, you trace this whole view of marriage. It's not just a New Testament thing—it's not just one guy's opinion—and what we discover is this. The answer to the "I" Marriage isn't that it's not going to be an "I" Marriage, but it's going to be a "B" marriage, for Beverly. I'm going to place Dean with Beverly. No, that's not the answer. The answer to the "I" marriage is that you invite someone—a third party—into the marriage. And they become front and center in the marriage and it changes everything.

Ephesians 5:21. This is the Apostle Paul. He gives an introductory statement to a discussion on marriage. Here's the introductory statement that maybe you've never heard. *"Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ."* *"Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ."* And the word SUBMIT simply means, I'm going to make your desires, wishes and dreams a priority over mine. When it comes down to my wishes, desires and dreams and your wishes, desires and dreams, I'm going to prioritize yours over mine. That's all that means!

He says I want you to submit to one another—and here's the kicker—not out of reverence for ONE ANOTHER. See you expect him to say, Dean, submit to Beverly out of reverence for Beverly

and Beverly you submit to Dean out of reverence for Dean. And, if you're not a Christian, and you're trying to figure out marriage, basically that's what you're left to do, right? I'm just going to try to put you first—and you put me first. You know, you try to figure that whole thing out. That works, you know?

But the Apostle Paul says, No, No, No—that's not what Christian marriage is. Christian marriage is, I want you to submit to, to place yourself under, the other person...out of REVERENCE—do you know what reverence means? Reverence means, *"Whoaaaaa!"* He says, I want you to submit yourself out of reverence—out of awe—to revere, out of reverence—to one another. NOT FOR EACH OTHER—FOR CHRIST! For Christ. Your Savior. Jesus, who came to the earth and died for your sins and paid for your sins. In light of what He's done for you, I want you to show reverence and respect and submit to your spouse. Now, this is a powerful, powerful concept. Let me kind of tease it out.

It would be as if I had a conversation with God that went like this: Hey, God! I'm so grateful for all you've done for me. You forgave me of all my sins and I used to be a jerk and now I'm not quite as bad of a jerk as I used to be. I'm getting better and things are changing. And you've changed my friends and my habits and you forgave me and you've given me exactly what I don't deserve. You know, grace and mercy, and you haven't given me what I do deserve—to be punished for all my sins. And the promises I broke to you. And God, I am so grateful to you, what can I DO to SHOW YOU how grateful I am to you for all you've done for me. What can I do? And God says, Are you serious. And you say, I'm serious. And He says, I want you to take all your passion, and all your gratitude and all that "Ummmmm" that you have on the inside toward Me, and I want you to shower it down on your wife. Oh no, no. no. This is about YOU and ME! You did something for me and I want to EXPRESS my gratitude and my thanksgiving back to you. And God says, I heard you and here's what I want you to do. I want you to take all that energy and passion and emotion and

gratitude and I want you to channel it right there on that individual that I've brought into your life—your WIFE! Um, ah, is there anything else I could do—I mean, could I just give ELEVEN percent? Can I go on a mission trip? Come on God, you mean to tell me that that I can't have like a lousy marriage and get something going on with you where you're blessing me and I'm a blessing back to you? Do we have to bring that into this? And God says, Yeah. See, I want you to submit to her—that is PUT HER FIRST—not because she's earned it or deserves it. I want you to put her first because, Dean, I put **YOU** first. In other words, I want you to do for her what I have done for you!

And here's the deal, Dean, I want you to take this debt-free relationship that we have—because you remember how I cancelled all the debt and cancelled all the sin and you don't owe me anything? Oh yeah, God, that's the great thing about being a Christian—I don't have to EARN my way and PERFORM my way – and I don't have to PAY YOU BACK—you cancelled all the debt. And God says, Yeah, and see I want you take that DEBT-FREE thing that you and I have going on and I want you to apply that to your marriage. And just as I've declared that you don't owe me anything, I want you to declare that your wife doesn't owe you anything. I want you to SUBMIT for MY SAKE out of reverence FOR ME—to HER!

And then He gets specific. This is a tough verse here, **verse 22**, jumping down, "Wives—be specific, how do we apply this to the wives—"Wives, ssssss—sssss—**submit to your husbands**" BECAUSE they're great—submit to your husbands because they earned it—submit to your husbands because they are worth submitting to—submit to your husbands because they can be trusted with your submission. Submit to your husbands because they'll never take advantage of your submission. Submit to your husbands because.....NO, no. What is that? See, He's consistent. **Wives submit to your husbands as TO ... THE ... LORD!** To WHAT? Yeah, Yeah, yeah. See, you know how submitted you are to me? (yes!!—high pitch) Yes, God, I'm so grateful to you. It's

easy to submit to you—I mean you’ve forgiven me. It’s easy to submit to you, God, because I’m just so grateful. Now, I want you to take all that energy about submission ... and I want you to channel it to your husband. Uhhh! Have you been paying attention? Yeah! He..ah. —it’s not about HE! I want you, out of reverence for me, to love him the way I love YOU!

He goes on, “HUSBANDS—verse 25—*HUSBANDS, love your wives*” ... just as they deserve to be loved. No. Here we go again. *“Husbands, love your wives, just as CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH”*—that’s you. In other words, here’s what He’s saying, “Guys love your wives like Christ loved YOU!” Guys love your wives like Christ loved the church—and look at this in case we missed it—“and gave Himself up for her.” Guys, this isn’t about how lovable she is...it’s not what she’s earned or deserves...Guys, I want you –out of REVERENCE FOR CHRIST, God says—to take all your passion and love for me, and gratitude toward me, and I want you to channel it toward your wife. And here’s specifically how I want you to do it, I want you to be willing to lay down your life for her—because I laid down my life ... for YOU!

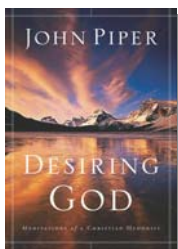
You know what that means, men? It means that we have to learn to communicate to our wives that we would be willing to lay down our stuff, and our gadgets, and our plans and our business and our schedule and all our stuff ... on HER BEHALF when it becomes necessary. We have to learn to make them FEEL that much of a priority. WHY? Because they deserved it—I don’t know whether she does or not—that’s not the issue. No, because there was a time 2000 years ago when God decided he would lay down his priorities and his schedule and what was most precious to Him on YOUR behalf. And we just go, Whoaaaa! You died for my sins. How can I say thanks? And He says, go lay down your life for your wife! It’s the best demonstration of gratitude you could show to ME... Whew!

I want you Dean—I want you men, I want you ladies—to take this debt-free relationship you have with me and I want you to apply

it TO ... YOUR ... MARRIAGE. WOW! Imagine what that would look like? We say, BUT GOD, whew, that's asking a lot. And God says, Yeah, as long as it's two big "I's" in the room, it's asking a lot. But you, as a Christian, you don't conduct your marriage in the shadow of two big "I's". As a Christian, you conduct your marriage in the shadow of A CROSS—and I DIED FOR YOU! And if you want to say thank you to ME—it's not just about ooey-goey feelings and a couple of tears on Sunday morning during a worship song—that's great, but that's easy! That's just spontaneous. You want to say thank you to me? You want to pour out your gratitude? I want you to go home and I want you to channel all that gratitude right into the life and the heart and the soul of that man or that woman—whether you think they deserve it or not—because that's what I DID FOR YOU!

I close with Paul's words about this relationship from **1 PETER 3: 1-2, 7 (NIV)**: *¹Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, ²when they see the purity and reverence of your lives... ⁷Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.*

Let's Pray.

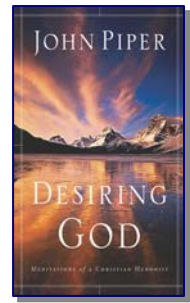


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taking the 1 out of MARRIAGE



1. **GENESIS 2: 24 (NIV)** says, *“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become _____.”*
2. **DEUTERONOMY 2:21:** *When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favour in his eyes because he has found some _____ in her, he writes her a bill of _____ and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house.”*
3. When marriage moves from wishes, dreams and desires to expectations, we expect our spouse to do certain things. We move from trying to help each other accomplish these wishes, dreams and desires over to a relationship that is closer to a _____ and _____ relationship.
 - ✿ Basically you have these two big _____ “_____” battling it out and basically trying to manage _____.
4. **EPHESIANS 5: 21**says, “_____ to one another out of reverence for Christ.”
 - ✿ Submit simply means, I’m going to make your desires, wishes and dreams a _____ over _____.
5. **EPHESIANS 5: 22 (NIV):** *“Wives, submit to your husbands as _____.”*
6. As a Christian, you don’t conduct your marriage in the shadow of two big “I’s”. As a Christian, you conduct your marriage in the shadow of _____ — and I DIED FOR YOU!