

A Wedding Message by Karl Douglas Bastian

Note: This message was based in teeny-weeny itsy-bitsy part from an outline from my dad, Rev. Douglas Karl Bastian, but by the time I was done with it, you could hardly recognize any of his, other than the original L.O.V.E. outline, but I did want to give proper credit where credit is due. *Thanks, Dad! :)*

Message: L.O.V.E. That Will Succeed

Proverbs 30:18-19 ponders the mystery of love with these words:

*There are three things that amaze me—
no, four things that I don't understand:
how an eagle glides through the sky,
how a snake slithers on a rock,
how a ship navigates the ocean,
how a man loves a woman.*

Indeed the love shared between a bride and groom and how it blossoms up until this day is one of the great mysteries of life... and yet here we find ourselves again. To celebrate LOVE.

LOVE often begins as an EMOTION, but it must mature into a DECISION.

While the world talks of "Falling in Love" LOVE ultimately can't be something you "fall into" or it can be something

you "fall out of." It must be something you "bind yourself to" for better or worse. Which is what we are here today to witness TJ and LINDSAY do.

There is a reason that Christ called Himself the Bride of the Church, for in the salvation from sin that God offers, God gave us the model for marriage.

The Gospel Message, that everyone here has most likely heard, and I hope has responded to positively, is simple enough, and is actually a mirror of marriage.

Let's look at the Message of the Gospel:

We All Have Sinned and fall short of God's Perfect Standard.

Therefore No one deserves salvation or God's forgiveness.

And yet, God, because of His Great LOVE, chose us anyway.

While we were yet sinners, Christ chose to die for us, only because, He loved us.

We've all heard, John 3:16 [QUOTE]

And calls us his spouse, and Himself, our Bride.

It's a model for us; for marriage.

For those of us who are married,
Our spouse will fall short our our standard of perfection.
There will be many times they will not deserve
forgiveness.

And yet, we forgive them anyway.

While they are imperfect, we choose to love them anyway.
And we must never forget that that as Christ loved us, so
we must love our spouse.

When we get married, we sign up to love an imperfect
person, for life.

The wonderful thing about "being in love" is we tend to not
be able to see
these imperfections at first. Unfortunately, we get better at
spotting them

the older we get. It's also because, while dating we are
working hard to be lovable!

BUT once married, we can finally relax - as the effort to be
at our best gets exhausting,
once married we start to be ourselves...

This is a good thing, but our imperfections start to show
more glaringly.

Then what? That's when love is tested!

So let's look at just four tips on what the Bible says it
means to truly love each other:

My words of encouragement today are for [GROOM] and [BRIDE], but it is their desire that my message might be an encouraging reminder to those of you here today who are married - as well as instructive to those of you who might be married in the future, and asked that I give them some advice that might be beneficial to all who are listening, and so as an imperfect husband myself who is still learning to LOVE better with each passing year, I offer this advice, using the letters of the word LOVE as a helpful way to remember.

L = Leave Solo Living Behind

Amos 3:3 Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?

You are both musicians, up to this point, your lives have been a separate medley that until recently played it's own tune. Since meeting, these two medleys have been interweaving together to play a joint tune. This has been the music of your lives up to this point - two separate medleys making harmony together. But it is time for those medleys to conclude, and for the master composure to begin an entirely new overture, unique and masterful based entirely on your specific gifts and skills and talents and purpose in life together. It will no longer be a joint score of two medleys dancing together in harmony, as beautiful as that has been to listen to, but an entirely new score written just for you, one that we will all enjoy as the years unfold before us.

You are now ONE LIFE, two unique individuals, but ONE COMMON LIFE TOGETHER.

Mark 10:7-9

'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.'

How does this work? God describes it in **Ephesians 5:21-33**

²¹ Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

It starts with MUTUAL SUBMISSION, both of you being willing to submit to the other - listening to each other, and both being willing to surrender your ideas and ambitions and goals and dreams, to that of the other. When both are willing to say, "No, you first" conflict is rare. When I was learning to drive, whenever my dad saw an accident, he would point to it and say, "there is another 'me first situation' - someone. or likely both, said 'me first' and a crash resulted. I've avoided many car accidents in my driving career my catching myself thinking, "me first" and imagining my dad pointing at my car in the aftermath and casually calling it, yet another "me first situation." How many failed marriages are sadly simply "me first situations."

But what about those rare times when there is an impasse and both disagree and yet a decision needs to be made? God had a solution for that. He made the choice.

²² Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.

In the end, the husband is asked to lead and make the final decision, after he has listened to his wife. Note, this verse comes after he has first submitted to her. Only after submitting to her, hearing her out and being unconvinced, and being absolutely sure he is doing the right thing to go against her counsel - a very risky thing to do for sure! For time will show whether he is right to go against her input! He needs to make the call.

But then, comes the instruction to the husband, for he is not off the hook in this passage. Too many men seems to stop reading here. And if some don't like this passage because it seems to belittle women and render them somehow less than men, they really should keep on reading, because the reality is, woman are truly esteemed as the passage continues.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her

What does this mean? This means men, your woman is worth dying for. You aren't just to love her enough to buy her flowers, you are to love her enough to lay it all down for her. Everything in between flowers and death. Your wife may be asked to submit to your decision when you are at an impasse regarding a decision, (only after you have submitted to listen to her!) but you are asked to DIE for her. I ask you, which is the harder command?

It goes on. Why is he to do this? In describing Christ's motivation for the church is says:

²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸

The goal of a husband is to see his wife glow and be happy. A husband who says, "You must obey me, the Bible says so." Isn't going to have a glowing wife. But a husband who says, "Trust me. I'll own this. You have nothing to fear. I'll make sure it all works out. One way or another, I'll see to it." will have a wife who feels safe and secure, even if he doesn't do everything the way she thinks he ought to. She will glow with quiet confidence in her man's ability, because she will feel secure in his leadership.

That's why it goes on:

In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ³² This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Interestingly, wives are commanded to respect to their husbands; but husbands are commanded to love their wives. Which is more difficult? Respect or love? Wives aren't even commanded to love! Which I find fascinating. God says, love your wife, whether you feel like it or not,

buddy. It's a command. He doesn't ask that of wives. Maybe He knows that's too much to ask sometimes! He only tells wives, respect your husband, whether you feel like it or not. **[GROOM]**, and HUSBANDS, if you want your wife to love you, you can't demand it of her, God doesn't even. You'll have to *earn* it.

Perhaps that is why I Cor. 7:33 says, when describing a married man says, *But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can please his wife.*

That should be his main mission in life once he is married... pleasing his wife. If he does that, he'll be a happy man. Wives who do that same, will only encourage him to do so.

O = Offer Your Life and Marriage to God

We all know, I think, that living for a higher purpose than just one's own ambitions and happiness makes for a more rewarding life. For one thing, it balances out our inborn selfishness. The best glue for marriage is to give your marriage to God. This means each of you asking God what he wants to accomplish through your joined lives. Marriages that are focused on pleasing God and reflecting God to a very beat-up world have a much better ability to weather the storms of life and to survive. It is actually difficult to find a failed marriage where both people had dedicated that marriage to God on a daily basis.

But the first step, of course, is to have given your own life to God. Listen to the Apostle Paul comments in his letter to the Christians living in the very pagan Rome:

Romans 12:1 *Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.*

Worship here is not attending some correct church - it is the act of giving ones life to God for a divine purpose. As a married couple, your separate lives are now a single unit, and together you both can offer your joint adventure to God to make a difference in the world, and when that is your focus, your focus becomes outward, and less on yourself, and even less on each other each - and your own problems shrink as you are looking outward. You become a team taking on the world together and your problems become less him vs. her and more the two of you vs. the world as you realize your marriage conflicts are lesson internal issues but attempts of the enemy to undermine your usefulness to the Kingdom, and you won't let that happen! You will find yourself resolving things faster simply because you don't want to allow them to interfere with your mission in life as a couple.

Everything you do, ultimately, is for God - and it changes your entire outlook on life.

**[GROOM], as the one who works to provide for home,
I give you Colossians 3:23**

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters,

[BRIDE], as the one who works to prepare food for the table, 1 Corinthians 10:31

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

for BOTH OF YOU, God sums up pretty simply what he expects in Micah 6:8

“He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?”

Offer Your Lives and Marriage to God

V = View Life Through the Others Eyes

For the letter V, learn to View life through the others eyes. The hardest thing to accept as a married person is that the root of almost every issue is our own selfishness. There is an old saying, "Ever notice that the letter "i" is in the center of the word "SIN" ? There's a reason for that! We have a hard time assuming the best of the other person.

Will we always have peace? No, of course not. But the Bible doesn't make unrealistic demands on us. When it comes to peace - it doesn't say, "always live at peace with everyone" it says, "*If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.*" (**Romans 12:18**) IF it is possible it says (and it won't always be!) as far as it depends on you (that means you must make every effort!) and then, let it go.

And good news, the Bible doesn't say you can't get angry either! But it does say, in **Ephesians 4:26** "In your anger do not sin" : Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry." In other words, you can control your anger and put a time limit on your anger. Even in your anger, you can be gentle, kind and patient, and resolve it before the day is over.

Do you know that God gets angry at us too when we blow it? But listen to what the Scriptures says about His response to us? His love overwhelms his anger, or we'd be consumed!

Lamentations 3:22-24

22 Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed,

for his compassions never fail.

23 They are new every morning;

great is your faithfulness.

We get a fresh start every day with God. Wouldn't it be wonderful if this very verse could be how each of you described each other?

*22 Because of **[GROOM'S NAME]** great love I am not consumed, for **his** compassions never fail.*

*23 They are new every morning;
great is **[GROOM'S NAME]** faithfulness.*

Or...

*22 Because of **[BRIDE'S NAME]** great love I am not consumed, for **her** compassions never fail.*

*23 They are new every morning;
great is **her** faithfulness.*

Try to see things through the eyes of the other person, at the end of the day, focus on the positive. We can get pretty negative and rehearse those things in our mind over and over again.

In Philippians 4:8 Paul wrote:

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

Indeed, the ultimate secret to a happy marriage is keep the focus off our own enjoyment of life, and on the

enjoyment of our spouse. When we are focused on "Am I happy?" The answer will never be happy enough. But when we are asking, "Is my spouse happy?" we will have something to strive for... the happiness and enjoyment of the other. When two people, committed to each other are both constantly seeking to make life wonderful for the OTHER - the end result is a happy marriage. Arguments are shorter, conflicts get resolved peacefully, decisions get made faster, financial decisions get made wiser, and each others deepest needs are met.

LOVE is the result, because each is focused on giving it, instead of looking to receive it.

Bottom line, get your eyes off yourself, and

View life through the others eyes, thats what you are signing up for today

Lastly,

E = Enjoy everything in life that is wholesome and good

[GROOM], Proverbs 18:22

He who finds a wife finds what is good, and receives favor from the LORD.

Would you agree that you've found something good in [BRIDE]?

[BRIDE], James 1:17

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

Would you agree that you have been given a good gift in TJ?

A rich and full life, a life of enjoying all that God has for you two, a life of loving each other, will come from loving God together. How do you love God?

I John 5:3

In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome,

Many consider God's commands are limiting them from getting to enjoy all that life offers, but actually the opposite is true. God's Enemy wants you to think that by disobeying God, you can introduce more fun or opportunity into your life, but in the end you will rob yourself the pure joy of the life God intends for you. Jesus warned of this when he said in

John 10:10

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

A marriage that is invested in following God and living life to the fullest following God will be fun, exciting and full of

adventure and have God's blessing and be set for success! People think "all we have to do is keeping loving each other." That's only half true. You have to keep loving God.

1 Corinthians 2:9

However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, No ear has heard, No human mind has conceived — the things God has prepared for those who love him."

So for all of us here who LOVE lets remember to

Leave solo living behind

Offer our lives and marriages to God for a higher purpose

View life through the others' eyes and perspective and

Enjoy everything in life that is wholesome and good, to the fullest!

If you do that, whether the flame of love is beginning, is a forest fire of passion currently, or is a weak flicker that needs to be rekindled, it can only grow stronger through selfless unconditional love, with God's help.

AMEN

PLEASE DO NOT USE WITHOUT WRITTEN PERMISSION.

I will give it, I just would like to know.

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