



**TO HELL AND BACK**  
Marriage Rescue - Part 1  
Senior Pastor Keith Stewart  
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***1. YOU KNOW YOU'RE IN TROUBLE WHEN...***

***Early Warning Signs of Marital Problems:***

- You have a growing intolerance
- You have a growing alienation
- You have a growing preoccupation

***Get to the bottom of it or stick a bandaid on it.***

Healthy relationships are like mountains to climb.

Unhealthy relationships are like whirlpools.



## **2. RELATIONSHIP SABOTEURS**

- ❑ Family Scripts - unresolved issues

*We tend to draw to ourselves all that we are and all that we won't face about ourselves.*

*The quality of relationships your children have will be based largely on the quality of relationship you have as a couple.*

- ❑ Cultural Scripts - unmet expectations

"For too long marriage has been saddled with unrealistic expectations and misguided assumptions."  
– Doctors Les and Leslie Parrott

*The marriage bed must be a place of mutuality—the husband seeking to satisfy his wife, the wife seeking to satisfy her husband. Marriage is not a place to "stand up for your rights." Marriage is a decision to serve the other, whether in bed or out. 1 Corinthians 7.3-4 (The Message)*

"We become emotional accountants only when there's something wrong with the relationship." – John Gottman

Healthy relationships are built on mutual caring, not mutual needing.

❑ Personal Scripts - underestimated differences

The Grand Reversal

"Let's imagine a couple that was once in love, but they have become 'estranged' which basically means, we used to be in love, but we have become strangers. And if you ever watch how that works, this is how it happens. You were in love and what made you in love with that person was certain characteristics. But when you decide to get angry, you take all those characteristics that you loved, and you read them through your anger and turn them in to flaws. You read the things you used to love, the very same traits, as imperfections and weaknesses."

- Dr. Timothy Keller



3. *"If you're going through hell, keep going."*  
- *Winston Churchill*

❑ Accept your spouse for who they are.

*Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you.* Romans 15.7

*...generously make allowances for each other because you love each other.* Ephesians 4.2 (Phillips)

"When a husband is accepted for the way he is, he winds up doing things her way. And she moves toward his way."  
- *The Reinvention of Marriage* (January 1992)

"The number-one reason people split up is that they refuse to accept the fact that they are married to a human being." – divorce attorney

"By far the most dramatic loss experienced in a new marriage is the idealized image you have of your partner. This was the toughest myth we encountered in our marriage." – Les and Leslie Parrott



❑ Acknowledge you're broken

Two underlying problems that destroy relationships:

- We are all wounded.
- We are all selfish.

*The greatest obstacle in building truly great relationships is justified self-centeredness.*

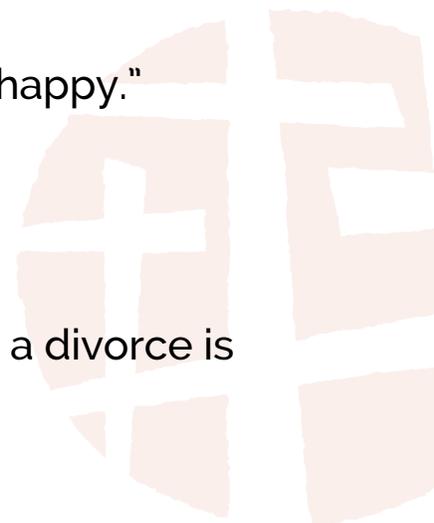
❑ Adapt to a new understanding of marriage.

"What if God didn't design marriage to be easier? What if God had an end in mind that went beyond our happiness, our comfort, and our desire to be infatuated and happy as if the world were a perfect place? What if God designed marriage to make us holy more than to make us happy?" - Gary Thomas

The world says, "Marriage ought to make me happy."

God says, "Marriage ought to make me holy."

"The one person you always get custody of in a divorce is you." - Dr. Bill Flanagin



- ❑ Admit when you need help.

*You can't heal a wound by saying it's not there!*  
Jeremiah 6.14 (Living Bible)

"In the U.S., the dropout rate is between 40% to 60%. What's even more troubling is that the overwhelming majority of those who drop out do so after just two sessions." - The Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology

*The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to advice.* Proverbs 12.15

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. If you're married or have been married or been in a dating relationship, share with the group how you met, what drew you to that person and what, if any, healthy or unhealthy issues you had that drew you to that person.

2. Talk about your family of origin. What did you learn about relationships, love, dealing with conflict, decision-making, from watching your parent's relationship?
  
3. Pastor Keith talked about expectations and in particular, the expectation that our mate will match our effort in all things. Besides being unrealistic, it shifts our focus onto our mate and turns us into scorekeepers. We no longer think about what we're giving (or failing to give), our only focus is on what we're not getting. Has this ever happened to you? What was expectation and how was it not being met? Were you ever able to find a solution to it?
  
4. Differences both draw us to others and repel us. We are fascinated by those who think differently, feel differently, act differently. There's a definite attraction in it. But the flip side is, at some point in the relationship, those very same differences become an irritant. Has this ever happened to you? During the grand reversal, how did that play out? Did you ever

come to a point of resolution or acceptance? If so, describe what that was like.

5. In the message today, Pastor Keith pointed out that there are two underlying problems that destroy relationships:

- We are all wounded.
- We are all selfish.

6. How in touch are you with your wounding? If you feel safe in doing so, share some aspect of your wounding where you have received or are receiving healing?

7. In terms of selfishness, Pastor Keith mentioned, "The greatest obstacle in building truly great relationships is justified self-centeredness." There are times when we justify and excuse our own behavior because our needs are not being met. Selfishness works against relationship more than practically any other thing. Where or how do you struggle with being selfish?

8. To seek help is a sign of maturity. None of us has everything we need in ourselves. This is why we were created for relationship. We really do need one another. Has there ever been an issue in your life where you felt compelled to reach out for help? What was that like? Did you get the help you needed? What did you learn? What difference did it make? What would you say to someone who is afraid to go see a therapist or talk to a pastor about a personal or relational issue?

