



Lesson 9 – “So Long as We Both Shall Love”

Satan’s Attacks on Family

Satan hates everything God is up to and will do whatever he can to destroy it. Satan simply can’t stand for God’s creation to enjoy life the good things He gives, and the more wonderful a gift of God is, the harder Satan will try to destroy it. Of all the gifts that God has given His creatures, few are as beautiful and as precious as marriage and the family. This means we should expect that there will be few things Satan will attack with more ferocity. Satan’s attacks against the family began with his very first temptation. Satan upended the creation order by tempting Eve rather than Adam and succeeded in leading the first husband to follow his wife in sin, and he has continued to attempt to destroy the family ever since.

What are some of the ways that Satan is attacking marriage and family?

Ephesians warns us that like soldiers in a Roman army, we can expect a volley of flaming arrows coming our way from the devil (Ephesians 6:16). There are countless ways that Satan seeks to undermine and destroy marriages and families, and an exhaustive list would go on for quite a long time. In this lesson we will be focusing specifically on the “fiery darts” that come from the wrong way of thinking of the world around us. Some things destroy marriages, but most people look at them and acknowledges they are wrong (things like adultery, spousal abuse, or gambling addictions). But some things that are destroying marriage, yet are held up by our culture as something worth celebrating!

Does it make a difference if a culture rejects something as bad or celebrates it as good?

What happens when a culture begins to call “good” “evil” and “evil” “good”?

The Fiery Dart of Hook-Up Culture

Several factors lined up for the Sexual Revolution to take place. Bad ideas, particularly from thinkers like Rousseau, Freud, and others simmered for many years and slowly came to convince people that traditional sexual morality was stifling and *caused* social problems, rather than keeping them at bay. Around this time, the invention of new methods of contraception and the ruling of Roe v Wade disconnected sexual intimacy in people’s minds from, well, having babies. The result was a rebellion against traditional, biblical standards of morality concerning sexual matters, instead replacing them with

the ethic of consent – so long as everyone is fine with it, it’s good. Commitment and marriage were replaced with “hook-up culture,” where sexual freedom was the mantra of the day.

What have been some of the consequences of this new way of thinking?

Satan promised freedom and pleasure (2 Peter 2:18-20), but as always Satan is a liar. God’s Word frequently warns that God will judge sexual immorality (Hebrews 13:4) and that sexual immorality is foolish and will cost you (Proverbs 7:25-27). This is why the New Testament consistently holds up sexual sin as a chief vice (Ephesians 5:3-6; Galatians 5:19; Colossians 3:5). Younger believers especially, living in a culture that glorifies the pleasure of the moment and denies a cost down the road, need to beware that this is a lie from the devil that will destroy their soul. Older believers need to help younger believers see the lie for what it is and disciple the next generation to trust God’s Word over the shouting of the world.

In what ways has the “freedom” of the sexual revolution actually led to a much greater bondage?

What can believers do to encourage and promote biblical standards of purity for the coming generation?

The Fiery Dart of Cohabitation

Cohabitation is the fancy term for living together before marriage. Cohabitation has been on the rise for some time in America and is currently at an all-time high. According to a 2019 Pew Research Center study, more individuals cohabited from 2013-2017 than were married, and 46% of Americans stated that “society is just as well off if couples who want to stay together long-term decide not to marry.”¹ What used to be shameful is now considered, not only acceptable, but *wise*. To live with someone before marrying them seems to many as natural as taking a car on a test drive before paying \$10,000 for it. After all, most people think, why wouldn’t you want to make sure you are compatible with someone before signing up to live with them for the rest of your life?

What is wrong with this line of thinking? What are the dangers of cohabiting?

God’s Word is very clear on the subject. In Hebrews 13:4 that marriage is honorable, but whoremongers and adulterers He will judge. God views marriage as something good and wholesome, but everything that falls short of that standard is not just “less than ideal,” it is worthy of God’s judgment. The difference between getting married and simply living together is the difference between obedience and disobedience, between blessing and condemnation.

People will often say, “What difference does a piece of paper make?” Good question, what difference is there between living together and being married?

¹ <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2019/11/06/marriage-and-cohabitation-in-the-u-s/> Accessed October 13, 2022.

Cohabitation cheapens marriage on the front end by arguing there is no difference between a couple being married and a couple living together. Divorce, as we will see, cheapens marriage on the back end by saying that getting out of a marriage should be as easy and painless as possible.

The Fiery Dart of Divorce

The way people think about divorce has likewise shifted quite dramatically in the past generation. What was once viewed as a shameful thing eventually came to be viewed as a necessary evil, and now is viewed as almost mandatory if someone is unhappy. In fact, some weddings have begun replacing “As long as we both shall live...” to “As long as we both shall love...” The idea of making a commitment and sticking to it even when it costs you has eventually been replaced by the thinking that when love dries up you might as well move on.

Jesus’s position on divorce is laid out in Matthew 19:1-12 and Mark 10:1-12. Although some of the details are heavily debated, the general message is unescapable: Jesus doesn’t like divorce. While the Pharisees were debating finer points about when it was and was not okay to get a divorce,² Jesus went back to creation and argued it was never God’s plan to break up a marriage.

Marriage is a picture of God’s love for His people. What does divorce do to this picture?

Why do you think divorce has come to be more accepted in our culture?

The Fiery Dart of Childlessness

“We don’t want kids.” Perhaps you’ve heard this statement from friends, coworkers, family members, or others. So what? Does that matter? The thinking of much of our culture is increasingly antagonistic towards children. What

The Culture’s View on Children

So why is it that many in our culture don’t want children? Some fear overpopulation. Some fear bringing children into a world that is racked by the problems we see in the media today. Honestly, many people don’t want children because children are a lot of work, and overpopulation and concern about the state world make great excuses. One popular Twitter user was brutally honest: “Like me? I’m never planning on having kids. I would much rather own a Porsche and have a Portuguese water dog and golden doodle. Long term it’s cheaper, better for The environment and will never tell you that it hates you are ask you to pay for college.”³ As we will see, God’s design is for couples to have children and raise those children to

² As was briefly discussed in Lesson 5: God’s Blueprint: Specifically, this debate is likely over the phrase in Deuteronomy 24:1 which gives as a ground of divorce “some uncleanness in her.” The Hebrew could be translated more literally as “indecency of a thing.” The Pharisaic school of Shammai wanted to emphasize the word “indecency” and allow for divorce only on the ground of sexual immorality. The school of Hillel wanted to emphasize the word “thing” and basically allow for divorce if for any reason, essentially the ancient equivalent of a “no-fault” divorce. This explains why the Pharisees ask if a man can get a divorce “for every [any] cause” (Matthew 19:3).

³ Hogg, David. Twitter, September 18, 2022, <https://twitter.com/davidhogg111/status/157166849270888576>

follow Him. Satan hates God and hates humanity, and so he does everything he can to frustrate God's plans and to keep humans from filling the good task they have been given by God to fill the earth.

What would you say to someone who wanted to have children but was concerned about their financial situation?

Wealthy countries typically see a diminished number of children per couple, why do you think that is?

The Bible's View on Children

God could not be any more explicit: children are a very good thing. On the first page of Scripture, we find that God's initial command to humanity is to have children, "Be fruitful, and multiply and replenish [fill] the earth" (Genesis 1:28). Later we see that God's blessing on individuals and nations is similarly described as "being fruitful and multiplying" (Genesis 9:1, 7; 22:17; 47:27; Exodus 1:7; Deuteronomy 6:3; 8:1). God's desire was and still is for people to start families, have children, and then raise those children to know, love, and follow Him (Deuteronomy 6:20-25; Psalm 78:4; Ephesians 6:4). God views children as a gift and a blessing (Psalm 127:3-5). Now, we realize that not everyone can have children. Some never marry, and some couples are unable. But as Christians living in a culture that views children as a burden and a nuisance, we as Christians need to stand against the lies of the devil and confidently proclaim that God views children as a blessing, and so should we.

Why do you think God views children as a blessing, but many today don't see it that way?

What blessings do people miss out on when they intentionally choose not to have children?

The Fiery Dart of Polyamory

When a culture rejects God, things will continue to go from bad to worse unless there is repentance, a turning back to God or at least to His way of doing things. The latest step on the ever-spiraling deterioration of our culture is something that has been called "polyamory." Earlier in this lesson we said some things are considered by everyone to be wrong, and included in that list was adultery. Believe it or not, we are now living in a culture where some are openly advocating for adultery under the guise of "polyamory" or "open relationships."

Why does it matter so much that marriage be between one man and one woman? What changes if you alter that?

What will be the rotten fruit of polyamory if our culture decides to go in that direction?

While this might seem like something that will never touch us, a recent ruling in New York might suggest otherwise. There a judge ruled in favor of a polyamorous relationship, specifically over a question of a what constitutes a family and the legal rights of the members in it. A landlord was attempting to kick out the boyfriend of tenant after he passed away because the tenant was legally married to someone else. In her ruling, the judge stated, ""Why does a person have to be committed to one other person in only

certain prescribed ways in order to enjoy stability in housing after the departure of a loved one... Do all nontraditional relationships have to comprise or include only two primary persons?"⁴

In what ways might this dangerous thinking impact our church?

How can we as believers be salt and light in this increasingly out of control world?

If someone asked you, what biblical reason is there why polyamory should be considered wrong, what would you say?

Once again, we need to take our example from Jesus and realize that God's pattern in creation is the answer for any questions we might have about marriage. God made marriage for one man and one woman. Anything outside of that or added to that is a perversion of God's creational pattern is a sin against the Creator.

The Fiery Dart of Homosexual "Marriage"

Finally, we have the perversion of marriage that says men can marry men and women can marry women. The Bible clearly condemns homosexuality as a sin, as we will look at more closely in our next lesson. But the world today has come to believe that gay marriage not only needs to be accepted, but celebrated. For Christians to take a stand for what the Bible says is going to require greater and greater levels of courage and wisdom, but we must be ready to take such a stand for God.

In what ways does the practice of so-called homosexual marriage distort biblical marriage?

How would you respond if a family member invited you to a gay wedding?

God's truth stands and continues to stand, but Satan will do whatever he can to pervert, distort, challenge, or subvert that truth. God created marriage as a beautiful, wonderful gift for men and women. Satan defiles it and tries to convince us that he is doing us a favor. Believers must hold to the clear teaching of God's Word and take a bold, loving, careful stand against the many perversions we see in the culture.

⁴ <https://nypost.com/2022/10/08/nyc-judge-rules-in-favor-of-polyamorous-relationships/> Accessed October 17, 2022.