

**Sacred Marriage - 7 Key Takeaways**

Vinni Sabnani

MFT 709: Marriage and Family Enrichment - Alliance University

Dr. Andrew Mercurio & Prof. Dominique Sampson

March 07, 2022

### **1. Marriage is for holiness and not happiness.**

The key takeaway is that we are able to truly experience joy-filled happiness and cherish our marriages when we desire to grow in our relationship with God which helps us reflect God's love to our spouse. As we grow in our relationship with God and try to be more Christ-like we find ourselves being less selfish and learn to love with God's agape love. In my personal life, it makes me ponder if my thoughts and actions toward my spouse during conflicts are directed based on anger, resentment, and the pursuit of worldly materialism or agape love. Taking a pause to sift through my heart instead will help me show my spouse more love. As the book mentions if my intention is to reflect Christ's love then a marriage relationship is an opportunity to love even when the love is not returned. Considering both me and my spouse have the same thought, then we no longer define our relationship with God in solitary terms but are the pair of cherubim with God's presence in the middle giving us an opportunity to showcase 'couple saint" that encourages many others towards a sacred marriage.

### **2. Failure to show respect is a sign of spiritual immaturity**

It was very interesting to understand the concept that as our partners and their weaknesses become more familiar to us, respect becomes harder to give. Instead of trying to correct or highlight the issue being able to forgive and overlook the same is a way of experiencing God's grace in one's own life. When we are able to pour out that love to our spouse we are actually pouring out the grace we are given to bless our spouse and marriage. I find this a very useful conversation to have among couples who are struggling in their relationship. Love and respect come hand in hand and being able to respect the other person when feeling loved is easy but the challenge is to respect even when we see the weakness as everyone is created in the image of God and God is refining all of us.

### **3. A Christian needs just one good reason to stay with his or her love**

The analogy of Christ and the church is a great way to understand the concept. As a professional counselor, I would see this statement being very helpful to help couples compass back into restoration rather than divorce. The analogy of the lightning striking but not creating the fire is very helpful. The fact that strong Christian couples will be struck by lightning- sexual temptations, communication problems, unrealized expectations, and frustrations, however, if the goal of the couple is to please God above everything else then the fire will not start

### **4. The prejudice that to become holy one must lead a celibate life**

I had a mindset shift as I realized that it is always a heart issue. If entering into celibacy with a selfish heart of being afraid to sin and not having time to serve God, it serves no purpose, rather marriage is an easier pathway to attain holiness. Through marriage, couples understand the concept of the trials and temptations which unmask their sins and hurtful attitudes leading them to a spirit of humility and grace that enriches their walk with God. The image of God's presence between the two cherubim facing each other with the wings touched signifies the holiness found in relationships. I also liked how in the Jewish culture the shekinah glory experienced by Moses was what was considered experienced between husband and wife as they became partners with God in creation through sex. We as Christians need to reclaim this glory of the Shekinah and have these bold conversations as a church so that we are able to live the fullness of life.

### **5. It takes 9 to 14 years for a couple to truly create and form its being.**

The concept of how neuroplasticity makes the neurological grooves stuck in singleness and after decades of repeated thoughts and choices do we truly transition from me to we? This was a concept that is new to me and I find it makes sense for married couples to understand this concept as they begin their new life together. It is like trying to eat a cake half-baked instead of waiting to enjoy the true fruits of entering into the deepest

intimate relationship which can develop only after decades of facing trials and victories together. Perseverance through the seasons of life is what will ultimately bring intimacy to the couple. As a professional, this concept can help me explain the science to couples who are facing hardships and give them hope. Just like the years of practice one puts into developing sports, music, or any other skill that is being learned to be able to execute well, married couples have to continue to strive for their neurological pathways to truly understand the concept of becoming one.

#### **6. Society focuses on self-care and we have lost the art of caring for others**

This was convicting for me in my own relationship as I notice how selfishness has crept in when I do not go the extra mile to care for my spouse in a way that is sacrificial. Just like the devil twisted words in the garden of Eden I realize I fell into the trap of looking at the sacrifice with a negative connotation, and if not acknowledged by my spouse, it meant I was taken for granted rather than seeing it as a powerful symbol of love between couples. As a society, we are obsessed with being respected but rarely consider our own obligation to respect. As a professional, this concept helps bring perspective to couples who are struggling in their marriages and choosing divorce.

#### **7. May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance**

I love this blessing from **2 Thessalonians 3:5** as it holds the secret to a holy and successful marriage. Unconditional love and perseverance to love and uphold one's spouse in all circumstances is something that I need to remind myself as well as Christian couples if we truly consider ourselves Christians. In 'The Four loves' by C.S. Lewis he tries to explain the balance of storgae (affection), eros(romantic), philia (affection), and agape (selfless love/ God's love). The four loves are truly what Christian married couples get to experience when we direct our hearts to God's love and love our spouse with Christ's perseverance.