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me at work and asked if I could come home early so we could drive to a lake. I thought she was crazy. I just can't leave work because the weather is good! I protested. Also, I just started this job! Well, if I see you at least when we were engaged, what is the use of marrying? She complained. What's the use, really? Fast forward ten years. We had three young children, two of whom were in diapers. I was working for a Christian ministry, and we were still making it financially, snuggled up in a city house in Northern Virginia. We were about to enter our Friday night ritual — laundry and a rental movie. What do you want to see? I asked Lisa as I gathered my keys and headed out of the door. Oh, how about a romantic comedy? Lisa replied. I cringed. The last three videos we've seen together had been romantic comedies. I can't bear to see another impossibly beautiful couple meet cute in very impossible circumstances, fall in love, get into a fight, and then spend 60 minutes falling back in love again. I breathed, looked at Lisa, and said. I am sorry. I just can't do it. I have to at least blow up one building and watch a car crash. If I can get something that's a little romance to add to that, I'll see what I can do. I took three steps out the door, then thought to myself, when please, God, change the world through us suddenly we should see Arnold Schwarzenegger or Julia Roberts become? I didn't remember any fork in the road or any flashing neon signs that pointed in that direction, but somehow, somewhere, it had happened. I remember the intensity of the night on which we had become engaged, the joyful exploration of our honeymoon, filling out an initial application for a mission organization, bringing our first child home — but now, ten years later, we had to spend Friday nights developing into watching other people fall in love according to a Hollywood scripted plot. That night I had no answer, but taking an honest look at my situation, I definitely shook awake. What was this thing that is called marriage? How did I end up here? Was there not much purpose? It's good for a man not married I became a Christian at a very young age. Seriously, I hardly The moment can be remembered God was not an active and conscious presence in my life. Because of this, I felt ready early on for Jesus. I was drawn to more than Jesus, however; I also remember being drawn to the girls. I had a huge crush on a dark haired girl in kindergarten! The first time I actually held hands with a girl was in fifth grade. Tina and I rolled around the skating rink, both of us described to us the blushing carpenter's melodic harmonies as well: I'm on top of the world. It sure felt like it! As I grew up, these two movements — toward Jesus and towards women — sometimes created an uncomfortable tension. The man I admired the most, a person on whom I wanted to model my life was the same guy. As a big fan of Christian classics — ancient books focused on building intimacy with God — I was fully aware of the long-standing tradition of celibacy — monks and nuns who lived out their dedication to God by pledging to abstain from marriage and sex. Because I knew that his love for God was so intense, part of me wanted me to embrace it; I wanted to go sold out for Christ, and in college I struggled with the words of the apostle Paul, it's good for a man not married (1 Corinthians 7:1, as found in the 1984 edition of NIV). ♫ in fact, there is much in Christian history that is unofficially (and sometimes blatantly) married believers supposedly second-class Christians who were compromising their integrity or too weak to control their sexual urges. Augustine thought she was being charitable when she wrote, referring to the intention to create, marital intercourse does something good with the evil of lust. 10 Evangelicals may be infallible, but Christian history does not, and unfounded prejudices exist. There's no question that the first pope, Peter, was married. (Jesus couldn't very well heal Peter's mother-in-law if Peter didn't have a wife!) However, there is also evidence in the Scriptures that young widows were already taking celibacy pledges during the first century. By ad 110, celibates vow that marital pledge could keep an eye. It became a little more institutionalized so that by the third century, the lifelong pledge of celibacy was not uncommon. By the fourth century, such a pledge was celebrated by a full-fledged liturgical festival. 11 Although Christianity was born from Judaism, a religion in which marriage was considered a religious duty (a rabbi suggested that a man who does not marry is not entirely a man). ♫ it was not long until married believers had hardly an idea during centuries of writing on spiritual theology (studying how Christian believers grow in their faith. Learn to pray, and draw closer to God). Most Christian classics were written by monks and nuns for monks and nuns. Trying to emulate a pursuit of married God are: The Idea of Following God The marriage wasn't really seriously considered; Instead, there was a great degree of emphasis on pursuing God despite marriage. I did some of this stuff in my relationship, but early on, my eyes opened to a different reality. I remember my brother asking me some questions about how the marriage was. I thought for a moment and said, if you want to be free to serve Jesus, there is no question — stay single. Marriage takes a long time. But if you want to be more like Jesus, I can't imagine anything better than marrying. Being married forces you to face certain character issues you would never have to face otherwise. I had realised I could pursue God through further marriage and not just despite it. Marriage didn't need to hold me back from my spiritual goals; It can really help me reach them. Jesus, of course, was celibate his whole life, so it's somewhat ironic to suggest that marriage is the preferred route to becoming more like him. But Jesus lived in a family, and, as Betsy Ricucci points out, it was all when the Father proclaimed, this is my son, whom I love: With him I'm well happy (Matthew 3:17). What did Jesus do to receive such praise? Nothing but living in your own home, honoring your parents and serving your father's carpentry business. Obviously it was enough to please God. 10 Family life is clearly not compromised, and after marrying for a while, you know that the emphasis on celibacy is little greater. All things considered, the sexual aspect takes just a fraction of a married couple's time. I was the first of my group of friends to get married, and I remember one of them asking me if it was ok to still just leave in the undeclared. Oh, you better call first, I said seriously, capturing his attention. Married couples roam naked all day long, you know. For a second, I almost had him! The real change of marriage is a commitment of twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. It is the crucible that grinds and shapes us into the character of Jesus Christ. Instead of getting up at 3:00 p.m. to start praying in a monastery, the question becomes who will wake up when the baby's diaper needs to be changed? Marriage calls us for an entirely new and selfless life. This insight occurred to me a few years ago when Lisa and the kids were traveling while I remained at home and worked. For the first time, it seemed, I had a free Saturday. By the time I remembered, I had awakened each weekend and spoke on with Lisa on what the family would be; I almost didn't know how to ask the question - what do I want to do? Yet that was the question I asked myself as a man almost every Saturday before I was married. Any situation that calls me to face my selfishness has enormous spiritual value, and Started slowly They understand that the real purpose of marriage cannot be as much happiness as purity. It's not that God is anything against happiness or that happiness and purity are mutually exclusive, but looking at marriage through the lens of purity started to put it in an entirely new perspective for me. But since sexual immorality is taking place in this regard, I find it fascinating that right after Paul says, it's good for a man not to have sex with a woman, he follows it with these words: but since sexual immorality is taking place, every man should have sex with his wife. , and each woman should have sex with her husband (1 Corinthians 7:2). While this passage refers to sexual relations, we can extend the principle of revealing truth beyond physical intimacy. Since there is so much immorality within us — not just lust, but selfishness, unrighteous anger, control and even hatred — we must build a close relationship with each other so that we can work on issues that will reveal to us our marriage relationships about our behavior and our attitude. In other words, not only marriage is a way for God to release us sexually; It is also a means by which God can redeem us in other areas of character. I found a tremendous amount of immaturity within me that my marriage unfolded straight away. The main thing was that I had to change my attitude towards marriage. If the purpose of marriage is simply to make me happy and enjoy an infatuation (which neuroscience shows lasts a mere twelve to eighteen months), then I should have a new marriage every two or three years. But if I really wanted to see God transform me from the inside out, I would need to focus on changing my husband instead of changing myself. In fact, you could also say, the more difficult my husband proved, the more opportunities I would have to develop. Just as physical exercise needs to be somewhat strenuous, so relational exercise may need to be a little vigorous for the heart to actually test stress. I decided not to focus on changing myself so I could have a stress free marriage either I would be happier or even more content in my marriage. Instead, I took the view that marriage is one of the many situations in life that helps me draw from God my sense of meaning, purpose, and fulfillment. Lisa can't make me happy, not in a final sense. Surely we have some great times together, and she's an amazing wife, over my dreams — but these are sprinkled with great times (and are sometimes buried in) demanding, challenges, and expectations of paying bills on time, disciplining children, earning a living, and keeping a house clean. I think what I'm after is a calm fulfillment, a deep sense of meaning, a fuller understanding of the purpose behind this intense, one-on-one, lifelong relationship. A man who believes as his Meaning comes from my relationship with God. I want to find out how marriage can draw me closer to God. There is another reason to emphasize this: marriage for all of us is temporary, in the light of eternity. The truth is, me and Lisa's relationship with God will overtake our marriage. Most likely the time will come when either Lisa or I preceded the second in eternity. The rest of the husband will be left alone, no longer married - perhaps eventually even married to someone else. For Christian, marriage is a final reality rather than a final one. Because of this, we can find even more meaning by following God together and recognizing that he alone can fill the spiritual pain in our souls. We can work to make our home life more enjoyable and peaceful; We can explore ways to keep sex fresh and fun; We can make superficial changes that will be preserved

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