



WELS Marriage Enrichment & Getaway Weekends

Each year the WELS (Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod) Commission on Adult Discipleship writes, produces and teaches a different **WELS Marriage Enrichment & Getaway Weekend**. What happens during these weekends? Gospel teaching, practical biblical application, learning, relaxation, laughter and sometime tears, recommitment to marriage, strengthening of faith, prayer and more. Thousands of couples find new strength to live and love in marriage. Pastors who attend receive the resources to take home and use in their congregations. Make it part of your marriage and your church's ministry. Find dates, locations and register on wels.net/adult-discipleship.

On four Wednesdays in February, I'll teach one of the six sessions from four *different* WELS Marriage Enrichment & Getaway Weekend events. Invite another couple to join you! Just like WELS Marriage Enrichment & Getaway Weekends, these sessions are for everyone...members of your church or not. I consider it an honor to teach you and thank you for the privilege.

1. February 1 – Discover the mystery of marriage (from Mysterious Marriage)
2. February 8 – Appreciate your incompatibility (from Simply Marriage)
3. February 15 – Listen and speak to show love and respect (from Richer Marriage)
4. February 22 – “Special-ize” your marriage (from Distracted Marriage)

2017 WELS Marriage Enrichment & Getaway Weekend

Green Lake, WI

Healthy Marriage at Green Lake Conference Center
February 10-12

Zion, IL

Healthy Marriage at The Inn at Market Square
March 17-19

Leesburg, VA (Washington DC area)

Mysterious Marriage at The Clarion Inn, Historic Leesburg
April 21-23

Carefree, AZ (Phoenix area)

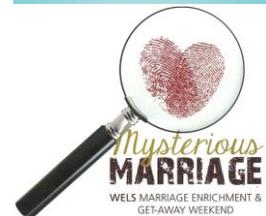
Mysterious Marriage at Carefree Resort
July 14-16

Orlando, FL

Mysterious Marriage at Orlando Marriott Lake Mary
August 4-6

Deadwood, SD

Mysterious Marriage at The Lodge at Deadwood
October 20-22



Pastor Randy Hunter
on behalf of the WELS Commission on Adult Discipleship



Wednesday, February 1

6:00 and 8:00 pm

Paul calls marriage a profound mystery, literally, a “mega-mystery.” But it’s not a secret. Because God reveals it, you can know, feel and act on the secret to a great marriage.

Discover the mystery of marriage

1. Marriage the way it is today

The history of marriage

Historical

“When God in love created the world, he made man and woman in his own image and bonded them together in marriage. Through this blessed union of husband and wife, God established the family, provided for the physical and spiritual welfare of children, and fostered the peace and stability of society.”

Order of Worship for Christian Marriage
Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal, p. 141

Modern Era

- For personal emotional fulfillment
- For personal sexual fulfillment
- For personal self-actualization
- For our mutual growth
- Not as much for public good as for personal good

John Witte, Jr.
*From Sacrament to Contract:
Marriage, Religion and Law in Western Tradition*

Observations?



Privately, review the box below and draw _____ about marriage today.

Changes in actions

The divorce rate is nearly twice the rate it was in 1960.¹

In 1979, 89% of all births were to married parents but today only 60% are.²

In 1960 over 72% of American adults were married, but only 50% in 2008.³

In 1960 virtually no one lived together before marriage, today 25% of unmarried women between 25 and 39 are currently living with a partner and by their late 30's over 60% will have done so.⁴

Age at marriage has been on the increase for more than four decades. *In 1960, the median age for a first marriage was 22.8 years for men and 20.3 for women. In 2005 the median age for first marriage was 27 years for men and 26 years for women.*⁵ (2013: 28.5 for men and 26.5 for women)

Changes in perceptions

A 24 year old male posted in a Yahoo! Forum that he would never marry. Most liked it. He concluded 70% of his married friends are miserable. A young woman agreed, "7 out of 10 of my married friends are miserable as hell (sic.)" She added, "I'm getting married next year to my fiancé whom I love but if things change I won't hesitate to divorce him."

Monogamy, a movie by Dana Shapiro. Since many of his married friends were breaking up, Shapiro collected 50 in-depth interviews with people who had seen their marriages dissolve. (He did no research on happy, long-term marriages. When asked why not, he quoted Tolstoy, "All happy couples are the same. Which is to say they're just boring.") A *Times* reporter reviewed the movie, "The film, in the end, takes a grim if not entirely apocalyptic view of relationships. The movie depicts two people who love each other very much but who simply 'can't make it work.'"

"A pornographic media culture may contribute to unrealistic expectations of what their future soul mate should look like. Influenced by the sexy images of young women on MTV, the internet and on the runway in televised Victoria's Secret specials, men may be putting off marriage to their current girlfriend in the hopes that they will eventually find a combination soul mate/babe."⁶

Some facts about marriage

85% of the U.S. population will marry at least once. (U.S. Census, 2006)

A 1992 study of retirement data shows that individuals who were continuously married had 75% more wealth at retirement than those who never married or who divorced and didn't remarry.

Married men earn 10-40% more than do single men with similar education and job history.

Children who grow up in married, two parent families have 2-3 times more positive life outcomes than those who do not.⁷

"Unhappily married adults who divorced were no happier than unhappily married adults who stayed married...The benefits of divorce have been oversold."⁸

"Longitudinal studies demonstrate that 2/3 of those "unhappy" marriages will become happy within five years if people stay married and do not get divorced."⁹



¹ W. Bradford Wilcox, *The State of our Unions: Marriage in America, 2009* (The National Marriage Project, University of Virginia) p. 78 pdf online via web search

² *The Marriage Index: A Proposal to Establish Leading Marriage Indicators* (Institute for American Values and the National Center on African American Marriages and Parenting, 2009) pdf online via web search

³ *The Decline of Marriage and the Rise of New Families*, Pew Research Center, November 18, 2010

⁴ Mindy Scott, et al., *Young Adult Attitudes about Relationships and Marriage: Times May Have Changed, but Expectations Remain High*," in *Child Trends: Research Brief*, July 2009

^{5,6} Popenoe and Whitehead, *The State of our Unions*, The Marriage Project, access pdf via web

⁷ Wilcox, *The State of our Unions*, 84

^{8,9} University of Chicago sociologist Linda J Waite, *Does Divorce Make People Happy? Findings from a Study of Unhappy Marriages* (American Values Institute, 2002)



At your table, agree on _____ about marriage today.

Name one trait someone might think would make for the perfect " _____ ".

[My single friends] are afflicted with what I call the Flaw-O-Matic. You can think of the Flaw-O-Matic as an inner voice, a little whirring device inside the brain that instantly spots a fatal flaw in any potential mate:

- "She mispronounced 'Goethe.' "
- "How could I take him seriously after seeing 'The Road Less Traveled' on his bookshelf?"
- "If she would just lose seven pounds."
- "Sure, he's a partner, but it's not a big firm. And he wears these short black socks."
- "Well, it started out great...beautiful face, great body, nice smile. Everything was going fine -- until she turned around." He paused ominously and shook his head...."she had dirty elbows."

The New York Times Magazine
"The Big City: Picky, Picky, Picky"
by James Tierney



2. Determine the biblical secret for living together in marriage

No two people are _____.

1. Marriage itself _____.

One way marriage has _____ me for the better:



Find three more reasons no two people are _____.

2. Genesis 3:11-12 -- And [God] said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" ¹²The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

Reason: _____

3. Romans 7:18 -- I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.

Reason: _____

4. Mark 7:21-22 -- ²¹For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, ²²greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. ²³All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean.' "

Reason: _____



From these passages, create two lists:

1) things _____ has done and 2) _____ we receive.

- a. ⁵Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: ⁶Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross! Philippians 2:5ff

- b. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. Romans 6:5

- c. His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. ⁴Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. 2 Pe 1:3–4

- d. We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. ²Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. ³For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: “The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.” Romans 15:1-3

Things Jesus has done

Benefits we receive



Use Ephesians 5:22 & 5:25 to describe the relationship between the _____ and _____.

²¹ Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

²² **Wives, submit to your husbands as 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. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

²⁵ **Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her** 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 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church— ³⁰ for we are members of his body. ³¹ “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” ³² This is a **profound mystery** (Greek: *mega-mysterion*)—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. Ephesians 5:21-33



Determine one result of the _____ on a marriage when ...

1) **One spouse fails to _____ as he or she should**

Result:

2) **One spouse experiences Jesus' love for _____.**

Result:



Our plan:

because of all that Jesus has done for me, _____ I want to do for you is:

The gospel helps us understand and practice marriage.

Marriage helps us understand and appreciate the gospel.