



Part 3: Stuck in a Marriage Rut

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Common Marriage Ruts

The Authority Rut

A commonly misused passage that creates a rut with wrong understanding:

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. 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. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. – Ephesians 5:21-25

Wisdom: When we use our position to exert power and control, we completely miss the heart of Jesus.

It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. – John 13:1-5

Wisdom: Jesus uses the full power of his authority to serve his bride, and we should do the same.

The Apathy Rut

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. – Colossians 3:17

Wisdom: Spiritual leadership is as simple as initiating with the word "let's."

The Communication Rut

"But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned." – Matthew 12:37

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. – Ephesians 4:29

Wisdom: Every word can bind or free – use them for freedom.

The **Sexual** Rut

The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife. Do not deprive each other except perhaps by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. – 1 Corinthians 7:4-5

Wisdom: You don't belong to you. You belong to the God who gifted intimacy to you as a safeguard and a joy.

The **Comparison** Rut

You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor." – Exodus 20:17

Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test? – 2 Corinthians 13:5-6

Wisdom: Compared to God's standard, we all fall short. Your spouse cannot compete with a compilation.

The **Unspoken** Rut

For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open. – Luke 8:17

Wisdom: You are worthy of safety, care and respect because you are a child of God.

Next Step

If you're stuck in even one of these marriage ruts, consider attending **Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work** next Friday evening and Saturday morning. All the details are on today's program insert. Register today at the Connection Point or online at ctkbellingham.com/classes.

Small Group Questions

- 1) Who's your favorite married couple on TV or in a movie? Why?
- 2) Who has the healthiest marriage you have ever seen? What do you believe makes it so healthy?
- 3) What are the characteristics of a healthy relationship (marriage, dating, friendship)?
- 4) Based on the scriptures in this outline, what pattern(s) does God use in breaking people out of ruts and getting them unstuck?
- 5) If you are married, are you stuck in one of these ruts? What could you do about it? If you are not married, are you in a rut in your relationship with God? What are you going to do about it?
- 6) What do you need prayer for this week?