

"Some trust in chariots,
and some in horses; but
we will remember the
name of the Lord our
God."
Psalm 20:7

I Demand Satisfaction!

One Plus One Equals One – Genesis 1 – God's Expectations

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I think it is fair to say that most of us at some point look at what we can get out of life. We do have times that we want to serve and give, but if we are investing into something, we want to know what the return is. We want to know if our investment is worth our while.

There is nothing wrong with making wise investments and determining if the return will be worth it. Wise money management is encouraged. Time management is valuable. There are things in life that we want to take into deep consideration.

Marriage is one of those things. You should never just jump into marriage without considering the impact. Couples are wise to sit under a counselor for premarital counseling.

Did you and your spouse have premarital counseling? _____

What do you wish you had known about marriage?

Marriage is an adventure and each one of us brings something into it. They are called expectations.

How would you define an expectation?

All of us have expectations, whether we admit it or not. You may be expecting to learn something from this study. You may be expecting that your grocery shopping may take one hour. You may be expecting to finish a project at work this week. We all have expectations.

We have expectations in marriage. Some men expect dinner to be on the table when they get home. Some women expect the trash to be carried to the curb. Some men expect sex three times a week, while some woman expect a date night once a week. The lists could go on and on.

To add to the confusion, a husband has things that he thinks his wife expects and a wife has things she thinks her husband expects.

What are some things you think your spouse expects of you?

"The Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, 'Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever.'"

Genesis 13:14-15

Has there been conflict over your expectations? Why?

Expectations are probably the number one source of conflict. Some may say finances, but even in that there is conflict over expectations in finances.

When an expectation is not met, how do you respond?

Unmet expectations can bring conflict, heartache, confusion, doubt, and a whole slew of other unwanted things. We have this inherent desire to demand satisfaction. We deserve to be satisfied. We have worked hard and given so much, now it is our time. Have you found yourself saying something similar? We have a problem.

Self.

Let's look at two examples of expectations in Scripture.

Abram & Lot – Genesis 13-19

Our story picks up with Abram and Lot traveling together. As their families continue to grow, the herdsmen of Lot begin to complain to the herdsmen of Abram. There is not enough room for the cattle and herds. Rather than arguing and creating problems Abram decides to tell Lot that they need to go their separate ways. So Abram tells Lot, "Please separate from me; if the left, then I will go to the right; or if the right, then I will go to the left."

Lot decides to pick the lush fertile land in the valley of the Jordan and moves close to Sodom. Abram gets stuck with Canaan.

Now here is the kicker. Abram had every right to tell Lot which land he could have. Abram had seniority. Instead, he placed his expectation in the Lord. Lot placed his expectation in the good land. Lot chose poorly.

What would you have done in Abram's shoes?

As the story continues, some kings come out to battle and eventually take Lot and all his stuff with them. Abram has to come and save Lot, but the land Lot once had was ravaged from the war, so Lot finds a house in Sodom. God seeks to destroy Sodom for its wickedness, but allows Lot to flee with whoever will go. In the end, Lot is living in a cave with his two daughters who get him drunk so as to sleep with him just to make sure their family continues. End of story.

Abram, on the other hand, becomes the father of many nations and his story continues to today.

What's the difference? Abram placed his expectation in God. Lot placed it in the land.

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In this account, does Abram ever demand satisfaction? _____

The second story is found in Acts 4:36-5:11. This is the classic story of Ananias and Sapphira. Interestingly enough the expectation involved land, but in order to get the context we need to look at the last couple of verses in chapter 4.

A man named Joseph is recorded as selling off some land in order to give to the church. This man has been such an encouragement to the apostles that they give him a nickname of Barnabas which means "son of encouragement". This is our context.

As we enter chapter five, we find a couple doing the exact same thing as Joseph. Both parties sold property for the church. Ananias and Sapphira decided to hold back part of the proceeds for themselves. They then came and laid it at the apostles' feet, just like Joseph. Peter, through the Holy Spirit, could read right through their motives. The issue was not the money, but the motivation to be liked and placed on a pedestal. They wanted the recognition that Joseph had.

They put their expectation in position rather than in God. Their story ends much more abruptly than Lot's. They died on the spot.

Did Barnabas demand fame for his gift? _____

Look back at Psalm 20:7 from the beginning. What is the significance of chariots and horses?

David was essentially saying that the two greatest military advantages mean nothing. David was not about to put his expectation in these. His expectation is in the Lord.

How does this work into marriage?

In marriage, we have a tendency to expect our spouses to fulfill us and satisfy us. Sure, it is okay to expect dinner as long as you talk about it and agree on it, but I am talking about something that goes far deeper. We have expectations placed on our spouses to fulfill us all the time and in ways that are not possible.

Psalm 90:14 says, "O satisfy us in the morning with Your loving-kindness, That we may sing for joy and be glad all our days." The word for loving-kindness carries with it a covenant loyalty. David is saying that it is in God that I place my expectations to be ultimately satisfied. It is His covenant, His commitment of love to me that will get me through my day.

In the end, God fills my love tank and anything else that comes in spills over into the lives of those around me – primarily my spouse.

How should this impact your marriage?

God's economy is radically different. If I put my expectation in my wife, the return is limited and measureable, but when I place my expectation in God, the return is unimaginable, and that return not only comes to me, but to my wife and family.

Now that is true investment. I like God's economy.

Oh, and I still take out the trash.

What do you need to do in response to this lesson?

