

# MAN WOMAN WILD UNFAITHFUL MARRIAGE

## DAY 1

On the Discovery Channel's reality survival show *MAN WOMAN WILD*, a husband and wife take on some of the most forbidding and remote locations with nothing more than a knife and the clothes on their backs. Testing their will and their marriage, they find common ground standing up to nature as husband and wife. The goal is to survive the extreme elements they encounter, and to do so together. Another reality TV show, *SURVIVOR*, also places people in extreme locations with very little to survive. *SURVIVOR* begins with several competitors divided up into two teams but every person is really for him/herself. Alliances are made and broken based on the individual's best interest. Each week, a vote or judgment is passed to eliminate one player from the game. Anger, disrespect, and gossip control the outcome. Players are indifferent toward the fate of other players. Only one person will be the "last person standing" instead of a unified husband and wife team as in *MAN WOMAN WILD*. Although both shows aim to test the wills and survival skills, the main concepts of these survival shows are vastly different: 1) We work together until you no longer are a benefit to me then I break my alliance with you out of self-interest because the most important thing is **ME**. 2) We work together. If one of us fails, we both fail. We share the common goal of surviving together and the most important thing is **US**. Interestingly enough in watching both shows, you can easily identify the core difference: Contempt runs wild on *SURVIVOR*. The husband and wife on *MAN WOMAN WILD* may become frustrated, angry, and perhaps even disappointed with one another at times, but undergirding their relationship is a mutual respect for each other and a mutual **US** commitment.

Take time to evaluate your own marriage/relationship. Does it look more like *MAN WOMAN WILD* or is it filled with contempt like *SURVIVOR*? Are you pulling for or against each other? If you're single, which strategy of survival will result in a strong, healthy marriage? Do you view the marriage relationship as a partnership/alliance that's valuable as long as you're still receiving a benefit of some kind? Do you view marriage as a **ME AND YOU** deal or as **US**? **READ** Matthew 19:4-6 and Genesis 2:18.

As a couple, consider watching an episode of both of these shows. Talk about what you see taking place between the different players.

## DAY 2

**PRAY** and ask the Holy Spirit to give you wisdom and insight into this passage and Paul's teaching. **READ** Matthew 5:31-32. In light of this weekend's message, this passage cannot be taken out of context from the Sermon on Mount and certainly not out of context from the first century Jewish world.

Since marriage and divorce had become so casual, Jesus connects what man has made casual with the serious. Just as Jesus used hyperbole to expose contempt in our hearts, He uses it here to expose contempt toward marriage. Is this a new rule for divorce? No. Is this a new moral code in which to judge others? No. This is Jesus' warning about holding our spouses and marriage in contempt. **READ** Matthew 5:31-32 again. **THINK** about the two reality shows we've talked about. To take this passage of scripture and examine it from the *SURVIVOR* player's strategy, we'd immediately see grounds for breaking our alliance, perhaps even believing we're justified in doing so. However, if we approach the teaching of Jesus from the understanding that we succeed and get it right when we succeed/survive together, we begin to see the true wisdom Jesus brings us. This passage doesn't lower the bar or present a marital loophole. It calls us to raise our marriage values and standards and return again to the heart.

## DAY 3 AND 4

**READ** Philippians 2:1-8. **REVIEW** the signs of contempt in a marriage relationship listed below. **TAKE TIME** over the next two days to honestly evaluate your own heart, your own thoughts, words, and actions. **THINK, PRAY** and **WRITE** about these outward signs of holding contempt inside.

**HARSH JUDGMENTS** – Do you see the good in your spouse? Or do little annoyances get spooled up in your mind as major issues?

**UNFORGIVENESS** – When your spouse legitimately wrongs you and apologizes, do you really forgive?

**ANGER** – Are you easily angered by your spouse? Is your home characterized by angry outbursts between family members or is it a place of peace?

**RIDICULE AND CYNICISM** – Do you criticize everything your spouse does? Can he/she do anything right? Do you believe that he/she can do the right things?

**DISRESPECT** – Do you openly criticize your spouse in front of others? Are you demeaning? Do you patronize or insult his/her intelligence? Abilities? Effort? Actions?

**GOSSIP** – Do you talk about your spouse's perceived faults with others before going to him/her? Do you talk to anyone who will listen simply to commiserate or make yourself feel better?

**LACK OF TENDERNESS** – When was the last time you were sensitive to your spouse's struggles? When was the last time you gave him/her a comforting hug or a reassuring, non-sexual touch? When was the last time you listened to your spouse without trying to fix or solve the problem?

**DISTRACTION TO ESCAPE** – Do you allow sports, hobbies, scrap-booking, TV, or self-medicating to emotionally, mentally and even physically escape from having a real relationship with your spouse?

**INDIFFERENCE** – "Indifference is a kind of emotional violence." Do you ever respond to something your spouse says with the word "whatever?" Being apathetic and not caring about your spouse and what's going on in his/her life, is telling him/her she/he isn't worth consideration. Do you punish with silence?

**PRIDE** – Have you deluded yourself into thinking that no one else understands or can understand your situation or relationship?

**JEALOUSY** – Are you envious of the success, peace, fun, excitement or caring you see your spouse enjoy with others or his/her small group?

## DAY 5

**PRAY** Psalm 139:1-6 and 23-24. What have you discovered this week?

**CONSIDER:** Have I allowed seeds of contempt to sprout up in my thinking, words, or actions toward my spouse? Have I allowed contempt to take root and flourish? Do I (we) view divorce casually? Is it considered an option? Have we become indifferent to one another - still technically married but hardly united as one? Is this what we want for our marriage? For our home? Is this what my Rabbi wants and is calling us to?

**READ** Song of Songs 2:15. Catch the foxes... even the little ones can ruin the vineyard. This verse is a reference to little things (words, actions, inactions and attitudes filled with contempt) that can enter a relationship and damage the "vineyard" (represents our relationship). When we allow contempt to come into our homes, it leads to unfaithfulness and division. Marriage can survive unfaithfulness. Marriage can survive the most forbidding trials and disappointments. But marriage won't survive contempt. Jesus calls us to ruthlessly eliminate contempt from our marriages. **PRAY** for your marriage today. **PRAY** for your spouse. If you're single, **PRAY** for the marriages of those around you and **PRAY** for the future spouse God may have for you.

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