

## Getting Marriage Right

### Outline and Discussion Questions for Chapter 1

Marriage was an institution

Institutions provide habits and meet goals

Marriage is being deinstitutionalized

Its habits are being broken and people are seeking to meet its goals elsewhere

Marriage is like a cathedral – It took a long time to build and was strong but it has been attacked from all sides (Josey: Wow, that's some strong language!)

Attackers of marriage

1. The Sexual Revolution – “If sex need not be confined to marriage, marriage becomes less significant or necessary.”
2. The Contraception and Abortion Revolutions – Contraceptives caused people to believe they could participate in the sexual revolution consequence free. Abortion caused the killing of millions of babies, a lessening of the man's voice in relation to his offspring, and a shift in focus from the needs of children to the needs of adults.
3. The Illegitimacy Revolution – Single motherhood grew until it was a norm and it became taboo to raise any concerns about the issue.
4. The Cohabitation Revolution – Today many couples are living together to “prepare” for marriage when in reality they are setting themselves up for failure and weakening the institution itself.
5. The Reproduction Revolution – Artificial Reproduction allows any one person or combination of people to conceive and bear a child.
6. The Gay-Rights Revolution – The gay rights revolution weakens the institution just as the sexual revolution by allowing premarital sex and it seeks to redefine the rules of marriage in order for homosexual couples to be allowed to take part in the institution.
7. The Divorce Revolution – America is no stranger to divorce. The divorce rate has been rising steadily since 1860, it had surges of growth after both world wars, and it practically exploded in the 1960's.

What are your initial thoughts or insights in relation to this chapter?

**Can the goals of the institution of marriage be adequately met in ways other than marriage itself?**

How have these seven revolutions affected us directly? How have they influenced our thinking?

How are we going to practically respond to these revolutions?

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### Outline and Discussion Questions for Chapter 2

Three approaches to marriage – premodern, modern, and postmodern

1. Premodern – Christian convictions were essential in establishing the rules governing the institution. The Catholic Church turned to New Testament texts and early church thinkers to guide them. After much studying of scripture the church took the stance that marriage is absolutely indissoluble. For this and other reasons divorce was not an option. Also, at this time romantic love was not seen as an essential piece to marriage rather it was seen as an added blessing if it occurred.
2. Modern – With the reformation came the unseating of the Catholic Church’s supreme authority. The reformers themselves did not believe that marriage was completely indissoluble and opened the door to divorce and remarriage on very limited grounds, (adultery, desertion, refusal of conjugal rights, and impotence). They also handed control of marriage to the civil authorities, further weakening the influence of the church in this matter. Also the Enlightenment and the Romantic Movement influenced people’s thinking about marriage. People were becoming more concerned with autonomy, freedom, and romantic love.
3. Postmodern – After the Second World War America entered a state of economic success. Things were stable on the home front, and since people did not have to worry about putting food on the table they were free to worry about “more important” things such as self-actualization. It was not only popular to try to find your true self, it was expected. Women gained more autonomy as they entered the workforce and for the first time they could think about leaving their husbands. Because marriage was no longer seen as a necessity, it began to be seen as another source of pleasure. Expectations of marriage rose drastically; and it was believed that since the goal of life is to make oneself happy if your marriage is not doing that there is no reason for staying in it.

What are your initial thoughts or insights in relation to this chapter?

**Although it is nice to daydream about earlier times when marriage was held in high regard, we can not return to them; but what practices or insights can we glean from the premodern and modern approaches to marriage?**

To what extent should we as Christians buy into the self-actualization epidemic that is so deeply embedded in our culture?

It is interesting that premodern approach to marriage is void of the idea of romantic love while in the postmodern approach this is seen as the cardinal reason for marriage, where should our expectations fall in this continuum?

## Getting Marriage Right

### Outline and Discussion Questions for Chapter 3

Three main views of the deinstitutionalizing of marriage

1. Declinist – This position believes the current state of marriage is devastating. They call for a serious critique and reform of the institution.
2. Liberationist – They argue that the changes in marriage are positive and have been greatly needed by our society.
3. Reformist – This position is more “cautious.” They believe that while there have been some positive advances, there are also things that need to be changed.

In order to establish our view we must look to the ones who have suffered the most, the children of divorce.

By nature, children are at the mercy of their parents’ decisions, whether right or wrong. “Children in all societies are physically, legally, financially, emotionally, and socially dependant on adults.”

It is a Biblical mandate to defend the defenseless. “Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed.” Psalm 82:3

Characteristics of the divorce experience upon children

1. Despite previous circumstances there is a distinct disruption in childhood. Children from high conflict marriages often watch and suffer abuse but are more able to grasp the reason for the divorce. Children from low conflict marriages can be completely sheltered from all problems prior to the divorce, but are then not able to make moral sense of the decision. It is a paradoxical lose-lose situation. However, the one consistency is that children from both situations suffer greatly from the decision to divorce
2. The day a child learns of the divorce is etched into his or her memory and becomes a vast turning point. Some children claim that this was the day their childhood ended.
3. The father-child relationship significantly deteriorates over time and often completely ceases to exist.
4. Economically, the entire family is strained and the child feels this in various ways from not having their basic needs met to not having the money for college tuition.
5. The mother-child relationship can be strained because of various factors such as the mother needing to work a lot more and being preoccupied with anger and sadness.
6. The family takes on many different forms depending on whether the parents remarry, cohabit or remain single. Through it all the children are forced to invite strangers into their homes and call them family. “Succeeding at navigating blended family relationships is one of the most difficult human challenges that has ever existed.”
7. While it is commonly thought that violence ends with divorce, the process itself can precipitate it. A child is also more vulnerable in later households because stepparents and live-ins are more abusive to children than biological parents.

8. To put it mildly, children of divorce experience emotional problems. They can have problems in numerous areas such as “parent-child relationships, self esteem, peer and dating relationships, academic and vocational success, behavioral/emotional adjustment, physical health, and economic wellbeing.” They enter adulthood less prepared overall than children from intact families. They usually have a lot of ‘baggage’ that needs to be sorted through. Also, because they did not have proper models on how to handle relationships, they experience difficulty in this area especially.
9. Divorce has an impact on one’s faith. The church rarely steps in to help in divorces, which has a negative impact on the child’s view of the church’s effectiveness. However, overall Christian children of divorce attest that God has been their strength and they have grown because of the experience.

Thirty-five years ago our society felt that everyone needed to be free to pursue self-actualization. During this time the church became paralyzed at stopping this epidemic and so they gave their consent to divorce through their silence. Today we need to be willing to call sin what it is when it occurs. This is not to say that divorce is always a clean-cut sin, but when it is, the church needs to address it.

Children’s needs have been sacrificed in order to meet the ‘needs’ of the parents. “Postmodern divorce occasionally wins benefits for individual adults. Whatever benefits adults may sometimes gain come at the cost of enormous misery for the children who must be dragged along for the ride.”

In the past the church tried to develop a checklist for acceptable grounds of divorce and today we are merely standing in stunned silence. “If children matter, we will find a way to move from older legalisms to a broader principle of just marital covenant making and covenant breaking – and then focus our attention on how to nurture the former rather than the latter.”

### **How can the church be more effective in ministering to the needs of children of divorce?**

Additional suggested reading:

Wallerstein, Judith. *The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce: A 25 Year Landmark Study*. New York: Hyperion, 2000.

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### Outline and Discussion Questions for Chapter 4

The only hope for recovering marriage is the church.

The purpose of this book is to “offer a distinctive Christian vision of marriage.” This vision is composed of four pillars, “creation, covenant, kingdom, and community.”

“Marriage is a structure of creation”

1. God made man in his own image; thus man is a relational being. We were created to live in community, the most fundamental of which is the marriage relationship.
2. God gave marriage to Adam and Eve before sin entered the world. Therefore, marriage has always had a specific purpose; it was not merely a response to sin.
3. God gave it to us in order for us to experience close relationships and to bear and raise children.
4. The “essential purposes and structure” of marriage are not limited to Christians, they can be enjoyed by anyone. In fact we all experience an “impulse toward intimacy” which leads us in the direction of marriage.

Creation purposes of marriage

1. Companionship –
  - A. We need relationships to survive. We are conceived through a physical relationship. We are born into a relationship with our mother and father, on whom we are totally dependent. As we grow our relationships may change, but they are consistently present.
  - B. Married couples are to be companions in work. God gave Adam the responsibility of taking care of the garden. Then God created Eve as his helper.
  - C. Married couples are to share their daily lives with one another.
  - D. Married couples are to love one another. However, love within a marriage should be defined as mutual affection for one another, not romantic love. “Love is viewed in the Jewish tradition as a result of a successful marriage, not the basis of it.” As marital love develops over time the two people become one.
2. Sex – God created sex to be physically enjoyable, as well as a way for the couple to unite in body and soul.
3. Children – God desires that children be brought up in a safe, stable, and loving family. This relationship has benefits on both sides. Marriage partners receive much joy from children, and children reap the benefits of being a member of the family. Marriage partners grow as they are forced to become less self-absorbed and attempt to raise their children to the best of their ability.
4. Society – In Christian and Jewish thought marriage is the foundation of society. Marriage benefits society in many ways. (See page 100.)

In order for a couple to have a successful marriage their creation needs must be met. To ensure that this happens, couples should be presented with this material prior to or early on in their marriage commitment.

What are your initial responses to this material?

**Had you ever thought about marriage as a part of creation with specific intended purposes before?**

How does this information change your view of marriage?

## Getting Marriage Right

### Outline and Discussion Questions for Chapter 5

“Love Incorporated” is an industry that has stepped in to help love-hungry people find or keep their mate. There are numerous authors, psychologists, counselors, etc. in this business who offer quick fixes to marital bliss.

The secret is “there is no technical solution to marriage.” (Shocking, I know!) Marriage takes time and it is a trial and error process. The more times a couple tries, the more they learn how to ‘do’ marriage. The problem is that in a divorce culture couples often do not get many tries before one of them moves on. This disables a couple from being able to allow their marriage to properly develop and mature.

While there can be some techniques that are helpful, the more overarching issue in this is character. Character is essential to marriage and it is the foundation of all of the techniques on the market.

The PREPARE inventory is a test that measures the compatibility of a couple.

Areas addressed by the PREPARE inventory

1. Marriage Expectations – Engaged couples often have inflated views of their future life together that can set them up for failure from the beginning. (Isn't it paradoxical that the higher your expectations are the more likely you are to fail?) “Biblically, couples can reasonably expect that each partner will make every effort to meet the other's creation-based needs within the context of human sin, which sets limits on all our accomplishments.”
2. Personality Issues – PREPARE and other pre-marital materials encourage people to marry someone with a similar personality. While this is sound advice, it is important to realize that character is the more important issue. Character influences a person's actions and thus their personality. It is most important to marry someone with good character.
3. Communication – Communication is essential for a couple to enjoy daily companionship. While it can be improved by techniques, it too is heavily influenced by character.
4. Conflict Resolution – It is important for couples to identify areas where they disagree and communicate honestly about them. Christians are called to be peacemakers and this needs to start in their marriages.
5. Financial Management – It is extremely important for couples to be mindful about handling their finances well because problems in this area can tear a marriage apart. It is also important to handle money correctly because it is an indicator of spiritual health. Jesus taught more about money than any other issue. (Four themes of Jesus' teaching on this issue are laid out on page 117.)
6. Role Relationship – It is important for a couple to agree upon how work and power should be divided. There is more than one way to do this successfully, two of which

- are the egalitarian approach and the complementarian approach. The most important issue in deciding upon roles is that the couple is in agreement.
7. Sexual Needs – Sex is a gift from God, not merely a skill. There are numerous technique books available, but how a couple treats one another in all areas of life highly influences this area.
  8. Spiritual Needs – It is immensely important for couples to be unified in their religious beliefs and commitments.

The idea of the soul mate is unbiblical and destructive to marriage. It sends people on long journeys trying to find someone with whom they perfectly connect. This can lead to many failed relationships, including failed marriages. Biblically when you marry someone they become your soul mate.

How can we prepare for marriage today, even if we have not met our future partner?

Is there any value in love incorporated materials that provide techniques or steps?

**How can we combat the idea of finding a soul mate?**

## Getting Marriage Right

### Outline and Discussion Questions for Chapter 6

Marriage is a covenant. It is just as essential that the couple understands the covenant aspect of marriage as it is for them to meet their creation-based needs. In fact “covenant is thus like a protective sheath around marriage. It makes marriage stable and sturdy enough to accomplish its God-given creation design.”

The Hebrew understanding of covenant is how God relates to and saves his people. Page 130 lists 8 key ingredients in scriptural covenants.

In chapter four we discussed the fact that marriage had creation purposes before sin, however, there was no need for a covenant before sin.

There is a need to discuss the difference between a covenant and a contract. While they are similar, there are some key differences.

1. A covenant places more importance on relationships while a contract emphasizes a transaction.
2. A contract contains a way of escape, while a covenant is to be everlasting.
3. A contract is merely made between two humans, while a covenant involves God.

Marriage as a covenant in the Bible

1. Whether or not marriage was seen as a covenant in the Old Testament has been a subject of debate. Gordon Hugenberger argues that it was seen as a covenant and cites Malachi 2:10-16 as evidence. In this passage God is angry with his people for abandoning their wives and thus not honoring their “marriage covenant.” He also points to the fact that marriage is often used as an analogy for God’s covenant with his people in texts such as Hosea.
2. In the New Testament, Jesus speaks of himself as the bridegroom and his people as his bride. Then, Paul takes this analogy a step further by comparing the marriage relationship with the relationship between Christ and the church.

Reasons why marriage is a covenant

1. It is entered freely.
2. It is done publicly and held to social standards.
3. It spells out both parties’ commitments.
4. It involves outward symbols.
5. It is a permanent commitment.
6. God acts as witness to it.
7. There are consequences for whether it is kept or broken.

There is a positive correlation between covenant and marital stability. In other words, theoretically, the more committed a couple is to their covenant, the more stable their marriage will become. Unfortunately, our society does not see these two as going hand in hand. Often

people hesitate to view their marriage as a covenant, then, whether they are aware of it or not, they are actually creating an environment in which it will be harder to maintain that covenant.

In life there are times when a covenant is formed without it being explicitly agreed upon by the parties. One example of this is children. When a couple has children not only are they forming a new covenant; their marriage covenant expands. The parents are obligated to provide a stable environment in which both parents are available to provide and care for the children.

Whether or not the couple is able to keep their covenant has far reaching effects. It changes their lives and the lives of their children the most, but it also affects their church and broader community.

How can we be mindful of keeping the covenant of marriage?

How can we help others to do the same?

## Getting Marriage Right

### Outline and Discussion Questions for Chapter 7

“In almost all marriages, there are episodes or seasons of suffering.”

Suffering is the “subjective human experience of pain.”

Marriage can be a source of pain, and this pain can be either acute or chronic.

There can be three elements to suffering in marriage...

1. physical
2. psychological
3. social

and at times all three of these can be simultaneously present.

External sources (job change) or internal sources can cause suffering. Internal sources of suffering can stem from three different areas.

1. A personal problem
2. The spouse’s personal problem – While it has been said that it takes two to make or break a marriage, as the first two sources of suffering show it only takes one.
3. A problem between the couple – “Suffering comes in marriage when aspects of companionship, sex, or family partnership fall far enough short of expectations as to create the experience of pain.”

The Bible is a rich resource on this issue.

1. Suffering is a punishment for sin and thus it is ultimately inescapable. This idea is introduced in the Genesis account of the fall. At times our specific sins will incur punishment; however, there are times when suffering is caused by the general disorder of the world that was initially brought about by sin.
2. God is not absent during times of suffering. In Job, God is present and responds to Job’s suffering. Throughout scripture God faithfully rescues and comforts those who suffer.
3. Jesus served as our example by being the suffering servant. He suffered in order to provide us redemption.
4. Suffering can have positive effects by causing people to grow in virtue and be purged of sin. It forms a person’s character closer to the character of Christ.

Christian hope is key in couples being able to persevere through suffering in marriage. Vaclav Havel said, “hope is definitely not the same thing as optimism. It is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense no matter how it turns out.”

When the Pharisees were debating the legitimate grounds for divorce and approached Jesus about the issue, he focused on the covenant and creation-based needs in marriage. This passage is found in both Matthew and Mark.

Paul dealt with marriage extensively in I Corinthians 7. He started by affirming that people have needs that marriage meets, and he emphasized that importance of the covenant, but then he did open up the door to divorce.

Both Jesus and Paul were concerned with calling believers to keep their covenants, not outline when and how to get out of them.

How to respond to suffering:

1. If suffering occurs from an external source, the couple should pull together and remain faithful.
2. If suffering occurs from a problem one of them has, that person should be provided with appropriate help, while the other person patiently and faithfully waits and supports.
3. If suffering occurs because of interaction problems between the couple, they should seek help together, try to change, and stay committed.
4. If suffering occurs because of a direct breach of the marital covenant, then the person who has been violated must consider whether the relationship can be repaired or not. The unfortunate truth is if one person has done everything in their power to preserve the relationship, they still can not force the other person to be faithful to the covenant. But divorce must be approached very cautiously because “only a fundamental and irreparable breach of the marriage covenant can morally justify divorce.” When this does happen, the innocent party should not have to face the situation alone, their community of faith is responsible for advising and supporting them.

Divorce itself causes pain that can be equal to or greater than the suffering experienced in marriage. “Divorce does not so much end suffering as it redirects it.”

A list of ways to minister to couples is provided on page 169.

If a couple can endure suffering in marriage, it will eventually lessen and the marriage can even be strengthened.

Before this chapter did you expect that in your future marriage you would have to endure suffering?

Do you now?

## Getting Marriage Right

### Outline and Discussion Questions for Chapter 8

Earlier the book stated that marriage itself is not a Christian institution. This chapter is committed to the third pillar of marriage, which is the kingdom. This pillar is the use of marriage to advance God's kingdom and it is uniquely Christian.

Jesus was about the advance of God's kingdom; therefore, we need to be about the advance of God's kingdom.

What is the kingdom of God?

1. It is a present and future reality.
2. It is not a specific place
3. It is not a vision or mindset.
4. It is the "state of affairs in which God reigns."

Page 176 lists seven things that will happen in the kingdom of God as depicted in the book of Isaiah.

"The kingdom is something that God is doing. . . It is not a human work."

While advancing the kingdom should be the work of Christian couples, they must first strive to have a firm covenant and adequately meet each other's creation based needs. Then they will "be in a position to turn their hearts more fully to a kingdom vision."

A successful marriage is itself an achievement for the kingdom. However, as Christians we are called to minister to the world, therefore we need to minister out of our successful marriages. "A kingdom marriage takes the overflow of marital joy and uses it as fuel for serving the neighbor and advancing God's reign."

Just as a suffering couple is drained of energy, a successful couple has energy to spare. This energy can be referred to as marital capital. Marital capital is the resource out of which a couple can serve their children, their church, and the community at large.

How can we ensure that our marriages will be successful enough to produce marital capital that will allow us to serve?

## Getting Marriage Right

### Outline and Discussion Questions for Chapter 9

Community is the fourth and final pillar of the marriage cathedral. Couples need a community to hold them accountable and strengthen them. While it would be ideal for the society at large to fulfill these purposes, in this chapter the church is discussed as the primary community responsible for strengthening marriage. Chapter 10 address society as a whole.

What is the church?

1. An organized group of believers in Christ.
2. All the believers of Christ as a whole.
3. A “pioneering group of human beings who devote their lives to the joyful work of the kingdom.”
4. A group of people called to bear witness to God’s truth including his vision of marriage.

Five ways the church has responded to the collapse of marriage.

1. Explicit Capitulation – This is the stance in which the church abandons Biblical teaching about marriage in order to keep up with the times and avoid being judgmental.
2. Uneasy Silence – This is the most common position. This stance is often taken because churches are so overwhelmed by the whole problem that they do not know the appropriate course of action; thus, they end up taking none at all.
3. Therapeutic Cleanup – In this stance the church does not necessarily teach the Biblical view of marriage. However, after a divorce happens they help to ‘cleanup’ the mess that has been made. While this cleanup is good, it alone is not enough.
4. Exclusion / Boundary Marking – This approach is essentially the exclusion of divorced or remarried people from ministerial roles in the church, while still allowing them to join and attend. With this rigid, across the board rule, they are attempting to hold their leaders to a higher standard. Yet, they often end up punishing innocent people.
5. Marriage Keeping – The term keeping is used several ways in the Bible. It can mean taking care of something or someone like a shepherd keeps his sheep, preserving life, or observing the law, to name a few. God created marriage and it is the job of the church to “preserve, honor, protect, and strengthen” it.

Key Elements of Marriage Keeping

1. First, the church must recognize that marriage is in a state of crisis and in order to stop this epidemic they must “undertake a considerable project of resocialization.” If this is not believed then the church will not even see a need for marriage keeping.
2. The church needs to be committed to a holistic strategy. This strategy must be creative and include several methods of learning, such as “motivation, reward, correction, modeling, and apprenticing.”
3. The church must combine accurate Biblical teaching about marriage with counseling and recovery ministries.

4. The structure of the relationship of the church members must be well defined. Ideally the members need to feel bound in community with the body so that they will be open to “direction, correction, and discipline.”

#### Model for Marriage Keeping

1. “Preach, teach, and model with the goal of nurturing whole, healthy, morally sound, committed Christian disciples.”
2. “Preach, teach, and model a reoriented moral vision related to the nature and purposes of marriage.”
3. “Preach and teach a biblically sound approach to divorce and remarriage.”
4. “Employ the resources of the youth, college, and singles ministries to offer sound instruction related to dating, sex, and courtship.”
5. “Require premarital testing and counseling before participating in any wedding or permitting any wedding to be performed in your church.”
6. “Offer marriage enrichment, instruction, and mentoring programs.”
7. “Offer crisis counseling ministries and a network of referral services for some of the most serious cases.”
8. “Offer a divorce recovery ministry or information about how to find one in the community.”
9. “Establish and maintain the kind of faith community in which relationships of intimacy, trust, and accountability can grow.”
10. “Establish clear policies and practices related to confrontation of sin, accountability, restoration, and church discipline.”
11. “Find ways to honor successful models of healthy marriage.”
12. “Nurture a radically countercultural church ethos in which congregants are accustomed to doing things differently than the world.”

#### **What stances have you seen churches take on the issue of marriage?**

What good have you seen? What bad have you seen?

How can we be a part of the solution in our churches now?

## Getting Marriage Right

### Outline and Discussion Questions for Chapter 10

“The health of marriage should be of concern to all thoughtful people.”

While Christians should first strive to get marriage right within the church, we also need to be proactive in trying to make a “vigorous public witness” for marriage.

This chapter deals primarily with “legal changes that may strengthen marriage and prevent divorce.”

Laws do have a purpose. Through laws, public policy makers attempt to achieve social goals. These policy makers can take several stances in relation to laws.

1. “remain neutral”
2. “create options”
3. “offer incentives or disincentives” – This can be achieved in several ways but two very important ways are through money and public honor.
4. “regulate access”
5. “mandate or prohibit”

The no-fault divorce law is given the most attention when laws regarding marriage and divorce are discussed. However, we need to be concerned about all the laws that attempt to govern marriage and divorce.

Areas in which law reforms are possible

1. “Entry into marriage” – The idea behind regulating the entry into marriage is that if it is more difficult to get married, marriages that do occur will be of better quality. The main areas of proposed reform are requiring some type of premarital counseling, extending waiting periods, and raising fees. These reforms can work together by requiring a couple to either go to counseling or endure a waiting period and a fee. Other proposed reforms include raising the legal marrying age and encouraging longer courtship by mandating a very lengthy waiting period. While there are problems that need to be addressed with some of these reforms, they are not insurmountable and would be worth the effort.
2. “Conduct of marriage” – This section of the law is the shortest and most neutral. The three areas where the state does regulate the conduct of the couple are money, children, and abuse. While it is good that the state is not trying to control couples, there is a need for the government to be more proactive about “fostering the value of marriage as a long-term commitment.” The main reform addressed in the book is offering a mild tax cut to couples who participate in marriage enrichment programs.
3. “Entry into divorce” – The government has not put many obstacles in the way of couples seeking a divorce. Basically a couple can obtain a fault-based divorce, in which one of them is held solely accountable for the divorce, or a no-fault divorce. There are no prerequisites to getting a no-fault divorce. A couple can merely claim irreconcilable differences and wait out the legal process in order to obtain a no-fault

divorce with little or no resistance from the legal system. No-fault divorce is under attack because it weakens the contract of marriage and can impoverish a mother and her children. Despite its weaknesses, it is unlikely that no-fault divorce will be extinguished; but it is still possible to add some speed bumps on the road to divorce. These speed bumps include...

- A. "waiting periods"
- B. "mutual consent"
- C. "counseling and education"
- D. "judicial discretion"

A summary of proposed speed bumps is on the bottom of page 218.

### Systematic Reform Options

1. "Covenant marriage" – This systematic reform attempts to emphasize the permanence of marriage by allowing couples to choose to make the commitment to stay married for life and promise to seek counseling before filing for divorce. This creates a two-tier approach to marriage, in which a couple can choose to take the high road.
2. "Child focused two-tier approach" – This reform is focused on strengthening marriage in order to protect children. It suggests that married couples who have children should be held to a higher standard than those who do not. These higher standards would include more speed bumps on the road to marriage and some giant hurdles on the road to divorce.

While law can encourage marital stability and permanence, ultimately the choice of how to view and handle marriage is left in the hands of individuals. With this stated, we need to be proactively promoting the well being of marriage in our society.

Which of these reforms would have the most impact?

Which of these reforms has a high potential of being abused much like fault based divorce was before no-fault divorce came into existence?