

# The Shrapnel of a Broken Marriage

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Think of what happens when a marriage blows up - an explosion with shrapnel tearing in all directions. The impact goes far beyond those immediately wounded for its damage is exponential throughout the community and into the following generations. I am sure that is one of the many reasons God says:

"I hate divorce." (Malachi 2:16)

The breakdown of marital love and devotion is central to a host of our modern social problems.

Bill Bennett in his book *Broken Hearth*, gives an outline of the social significance of these reversals in our culture:

"It is fashionable these days to say and to believe that matters like divorce, illegitimacy, cohabitation, and single-parenting are private matters that are not the business of the wider community. To which I would respond: There are few matters of more profound public consequence than the condition of marriage and families. Most of our social pathologies – crime, imprisonment rates, welfare, educational underachievement, alcohol and drug abuse, suicide, depression, sexually transmitted diseases – are manifestation, direct and indirect, of the crack-up of the modern American family." P4

Many pastors are like my friend who pastors a large church in the South who tells me that 85% of all pastoral resources are directed to the results of divorce. His prescription is to do preventive work on the existing marriages in his church, but he is so bombarded by the fallout, he is hampered from the work of building good foundations.

Just one personal comment regarding your marriage: If you feel that your marriage is just "ok" – surviving in a "ho hum" state, then you need to treat your marriage as if it were in radical crisis. 'Ho hum' marriages are not Christ honoring in any way. In fact they:

1. Break the law of God.
2. Wreak havoc in society.
3. Mar the evangelistic enterprise.

The husband's love for his wife was designed by God to tell the story of God's love for the world, and when you harm this love, you have maligned the Love of God and the

price paid for sin in the death of His son. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son." John 3:16. See also Ephesians 5:22.

Healthy marriages are critical to the growth of the Word of God as we saw in the early church. Marriage was designed by God to tell the story of love and without these illustrations, the character of the love of God for mankind is hidden.

"In our marriage we tell the next generation what sex and marriage and fidelity look like to Christians. We are prophets, for better and for worse, of the future of Christian marriage".

Evelyn and James Whitehead, p265 Sacred Marriage, by Gary Thomas