

# Faithful and Fruitful Marriage – Marriage is Honorable (Heb 13:4)

- A Redeemed Culture #7

**Introduction** – When a man and a woman enter into the covenant of marriage, they are taking on one of the highest vocations that exist upon this earth. The offices of ‘husband’ and ‘wife’ bear more weight upon the success and failure of a person’s life than almost any other office they will hold. And although one may have understood this years ago, maybe even decades ago, one’s marriage never remains stagnant, but always presents itself with new challenges, blessings, and warnings. Somewhere, in Hebrews, it is written, “*Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your heart.*”

**Marriage is honorable.** “Honorable” describes what Jesus (and all saints in Christ) have been crowned with (Heb 2:7), or the preciousness of certain stones (1 Cor 3:12). What do we do with precious stones or a royal crown? We set them up in places to be seen and admired. We pay particular attention to them, setting them apart, protecting them, while at the same time showing them forth. This is what marriage is, scripturally understood. What does the world understand marriage as and how does it treat marriage?

An opportunity for legal rights and civil benefits for “me” –

Something like a revolving door that I can swing through one way and then another whenever I so choose -

Something for me to define in my own heart, for sincerity is my final judge -

What does the church think of marriage? In general, it has become something we hold to as important, moral, or right – but we do not honor it as it should be honored. When we look at a crown, we see past the crown and recognize the glory of the king. When we look at marriage (or live in a marriage) we are to see past the marriage to the Great Wedding it portrays.

This has to have implications on how a man and a woman approach marriage – and implications on how we are to live in a marriage. With eyes of faith, we cannot teach on marriage without always finding ourselves proclaiming the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. And so, preaching on marriage is a proclamation of the gospel. And so is living in the covenant of marriage.

“...among all” – to the married and unmarried, marriage is honorable. It is a public declaration – not a private ceremony that no one knows about. Even though it is primarily about a man leaving his family and then pursuing a wife (Gen 2:24), there are civil interests and ecclesiastical interests as well. Family units are the building blocks of society and culture. Everyone in a variety of ways is required to honor this new union.

**Marriage is sexual** - Marriage is a sexual union. We must be careful not to get our categories mixed up. Sex is a gift, and like any created gift, it can be enjoyed properly, or perverted, misused, and taken and used as a club upon another. And so, the writer makes two points back to back.

**The Marriage Bed is undefiled** – Understood and handled rightly, sexual union for a husband and a wife is a glorious gift; and in that context, there is nothing to be ashamed about. There, in the protection of the covenant walls, the cultivation of physical love is a great protection (1 Cor 7:2-3) and a place of mutual pleasure (Song of Solomon 7:10ff).

**Fornicators and Adulterers God Will Judge** – Sexuality is an incredibly naked thing, and affects the entire person, not only his or her body. Therefore, violators of the covenant of marriage will receive the strongest rebuke from the Judge. Fornicators are those who engage in sexual activity absent a marriage covenant. Adulterers are those who engage in sexual activity contrary to an established marriage covenant. The bottom line is that there is no ‘wiggle-room’ for those who are trying to establish their own standards.

## Why Is It So Important to Have Such a High View of Marriage in our Families and in the Culture Generally? –

Look at the state of our culture. STDs, AIDS, out-of-wedlock pregnancies, abortion, divorce, single-moms in poverty, lower and lower childbirth rates, infertility, date-rape, morning-after pills, homosexuality (what will stop a return to bigamy and polygamy?), constant spam for sexual enhancements, open and accepted pornography, and a backlog of perversions still in hiding.

**Christ First** – Hebrews 1-10 was all about the supremacy of Jesus Christ and His New Covenant over everything else. Those who have a high view of Christ and His covenant will inevitably have a high, honoring view of marriage, of sex, and of covenant vows. They will live with these ‘precious’ stones around them and see through them all that they proclaim – and they will honor them all the more.

**Childrearing and Marriage/Sex** – Anyone with children cannot help but look at the list of sins above and wonder to themselves how in the world they are going to protect their children. The greatest thing you can do for your children is give them an authentic marriage to stare at. You do not need to show them all the counterfeits out there as long as they are staring at the real thing. They will find it much easier to resist temptations that they will have, if they see those temptations as counterfeits to the thing they have gloriously enjoyed observing in their home. And when you then turn and teach them about the church and about Christ, and husbands and wives, dots will naturally connect for them in this mystery.

**Getting Clean** – What if you’ve blown it? Have you been guilty of renaming the marriage covenant? Have you been guilty of lust, fornication, or adultery? Have you been negligent of your covenant vows? Consider these other verses from Hebrews: 2:17-18, 4:14-16, 7:26-27, 9:13-15, 27-28, 10:19-25. Purity does not come from our good works. Purity, a clean conscience, forgiveness, repentance, and power from sin, are all the gift of God in Jesus Christ. A culture is being redeemed. Never forget that.

Dave Hatcher – May 1, 2005