

# The Marvelous Institution of Marriage, Part 1

## Foundations of Marriage

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A brief look around our church will prove that God is still making both male and female humans. Equally as apparent is that male and females still get married. Although we have strayed significantly farther from the second observation than the first we can generally say that marriage is still important. As Christians we should consider it vital. When we started this church we stated that we very much wanted to be a fellowship that stressed the importance of Godly marriages and therefore Godly families. Therefore I will be preaching through a series of topics that deal with marriages and families.

Recently, I was in a downtown Seattle bookstore where there was an entire wall of books dealing with marriage. I found the same thing at a local Christian bookstore. One might think that with all of the literature and seminars that are available, our country should have the best marriages on the planet. This country has the highest divorce rate in the world; clearly, our education has helped little.

Before we can make disciples of the world, we must ensure that our homes are in order. If we don't, we will find ourselves to be like the men of Ai who looked back and saw their city burning.

In this introduction to these topics, we will consider four primary purposes for the institution of marriage.

- **God intended helpful companionship in the marriage**

Genesis 2:15-25

*15 Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17 "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."*

*18 And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him." 19 Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. 20 So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him. 21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. 22 Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. 23 And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man." 24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. 25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed. (NKJV)*

- Notice that Scripture discusses Adam and Eve up to verse 23 and then in verse 24 God says "Therefore a man..." we can see that this example of Adam and Eve was to be a paradigm of all future relationships. Also notice that work came in before the fall. Work is not a fruit of the fall, Adam was to tend the garden from the beginning. After the fall, the work became more difficult. Finally, please notice that God did not create another Adam. God created someone like Adam but not another Adam; he did not create someone else to take responsibility for the work.
- It is also important to notice from chapter 1:31, after God had made Adam and Eve He declared everything to be good. The institution of marriage was complete between Adam and Eve; children do not complete a marriage, they are a wonderful extension of it.

- God created the man first and gave him the task of tending the garden. After naming all of the animals, Adam could not find a helper suitable for him. The first point to consider in these verses is that God declared that it was not good for Adam to be alone. God did not primarily create us to be single. Although there are those to whom He has given the gift of celibacy, the pattern is overwhelmingly one where a man and woman are married.
- The next important thing to notice in the verses is that Adam needed help. God had given him the task of tending the garden and it was necessary for him to have a helper. This is absolutely critical. God has created men with the responsibility of performing some task and He also created women (as wives) to be perfect helpers. The primary purpose for the wife was that of helper. We do not see that Adam had his thing to do and Eve had her thing to do and they just shared a common dwelling. No, Eve was made to help Adam in his task. We can see this same thing taught in the NT:

**1 Corinthians 11:7-9** *7 For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. 8 For man is not from woman, but woman from man. 9 Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man. (NKJV)*

In these verses Paul states that the creation order had a purpose and a meaning. The order in which God chose to create humans was not simply a matter of chance but that God intended there to be a spiritual truth to this order; the woman was created for the man and this relationship was established around a covenant.

- **God Expects Godly Children**

**Malachi 2:13-16**

*13 And this is the second thing you do: You cover the altar of the LORD with tears, With weeping and crying; So He does not regard the offering anymore, Nor receive it with goodwill from your hands. 14 Yet you say, "For what reason?" Because the LORD has been witness Between you and the wife of your youth, With whom you have dealt treacherously; Yet she is your companion And your wife by covenant. 15 But did He not make them one, Having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring. Therefore take heed to your spirit, And let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth. 16 "For the LORD God of Israel says That He hates divorce, For it covers one's garment with violence," Says the LORD of hosts. "Therefore take heed to your spirit, That you do not deal treacherously." (NKJV)*

- Another founding principle of marriage is that God wants us to render unto Him Godly offspring. If God felt that it was possible to accomplish this as a single parent apparently marriage would not be necessary and we could have asexual procreation. But God chose to have Godly children be rendered unto Him by means of a man and woman coming together in marriage.
- Men, do you want Godly offspring? These verses plainly say that you are not to deal treacherously with your wife. Simply being married is not enough. In order to have Godly offspring, you must have a Godly marriage and this requires that you pour yourself out for your wife.

- **God intended marriage to be a protection**

**1 Corinthians 7:1-5**

*1 Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. 2 Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. 3 Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. 4 The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. 5 Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to*

*fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. (NKJV)*

- Here Paul answers a number of the questions that the Corinthians had about marriage. The Greco-Roman Empire was known for its sexual immorality. Within the Empire the Corinthians were on the fringes and were considered by the Romans to be sexually vial. So, within the Empire the Corinthians were known as the sexually perverse. It is no wonder that there were questions on this subject.
  - Paul tells them that it would be better to get married (given the current distress vs. 26) than to be sexually impure. The distress was the impending persecution that was to come to Christians. It is much harder to remain faithful to Christ when you have the concerns of a family but nevertheless, for the sake of sexual purity, they should get married.
  - What we see here is that clearly Christianity teaches that a marriage is a sexual relationship. It is not *primarily* a sexual relationship but it is an important component of the relationship. Given that we know that men and women are different, each is responsible for understanding the other. Husbands particularly are told to dwell with their wife with understanding. Men, the complexity of your wife does not excuse you from the burden of knowing how to love your wife.
  - This quality of this relationship is a function of the quality of the relationship that each has with God. If God is number one in the life of a husband, his wife will receive far more love that if she were number one in his life.
- **God intended the marriage relationship to be messianic.**

#### **Ephesians 5:31-33**

*31 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." 32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. (NKJV)*

- From the beginning, God has intended that the relationship between a husband and his wife would look very much like the relationship between Christ and His Church. In subsequent weeks when we consider the responsibilities of husbands and wives we will look into this truth even further.