

Love and Marriage

Lesson 4: Marriage: God's Design



ANONYMOUS QUESTIONNAIRE

<https://forms.gle/dZ6oXHoFRe5QSWN98>

Questions & Objectives

- How does God define marriage? What can we learn from the Scriptural pattern?
- Marriage is more than companionship.
- Scripture prescribes a holy order for marriage.

Lesson

God's Plan of Marriage

²³And the man said:

*"This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called 'woman,' for out of man she was taken."*

²⁴For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife,
and they will become one flesh.

- Genesis 2:23-24 (BSB)

A Biblical Definition

What is the Biblical definition of marriage?

This is the Scriptural pattern and definition that we see all throughout the Bible.

From the Beginning

*The LORD God also said, "It is not good for the man to be alone.
I will make for him a suitable helper."*

- Genesis 2:18 (BSB)



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What does this verse show us?

1. It's not good for man to be _____.
2. Adam needed a _____.

More than Companionship

Marriage is a beautiful way for us to find lifelong companionship, and this is one of the good benefits of marriage. However, we should be careful not to reduce marriage to being solely about companionship, or conversely, elevate it to an almost idolatrous level.

What errors can we fall into when we view the purpose of marriage as primarily being for companionship?

1. I need someone to _____ me.
2. It can be _____ — _____ reasoning.

MY IDENTITY MUST BE FOUNDED ON AND FOUND IN CHRIST ALONE.

A "Suitable Helper"

The second part of Genesis 2:18 uses the term "*ēzer kenegdo*":

- Hebrew, *ēzer* – _____



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*Without Eve, Adam wouldn't have been able to reproduce (be fruitful and multiply).
Without Eve, Adam wouldn't have been able to rule (fill, subdue, and have dominion).
Without Eve, Adam wouldn't have been able to work and keep. And this was "not good."
- Dr. Christopher Yuan*

- Hebrew, *kenegdo* – alike, but _____.
 - Synonyms include: *comparable, complementary, corresponding.*
- Genesis 1 provides a theme of separating and binding, which carries through to man and woman:

This is the Scriptural pattern and God's paradigm of marriage. Anything else is not.

A Reflection & a Foreshadow

A husband and wife marriage reflects the harmony of God and the Trinity: separate persons in unity: even down to the DNA, which is bound together in children.

Marriage is a reflection and foreshadowing in other ways, too.

1. The marriage covenant reflects God's own covenants with us, as a _____ covenant.
 - a. Consider God's covenants in the Bible:
 - i. Abrahamic covenant
 - ii. The Mosaic covenant
 - iii. The New Covenant of Christ



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2. Marriage is a reflection of God's characteristics.
 - a. It is an expression of love, faithfulness, harmonious relationship, etc., - but it's not the highest ideal of these: _____ is.
3. Marriage is a _____ of what's to come.
 - a. The ultimate purpose of marriage is to point to the reality of Christ and the Church.
 - b. *Ephesians 5:25-27; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 19:7-9*

God's Holy Order

God has put in place a divine order for all things: creation, His church, and individuals; as well as marriages and families.

*For God is not a God of disorder, but of peace—as in all the churches of the saints.
- 1 Corinthians 14:33 (BSB)*

What is God's holy order and pattern for the family?

GOD'S FAMILIAL ORDER IS THE GREATEST SOURCE OF HARMONY, PEACE, AND POWER WITHIN A MARRIAGE; IT CAN ALSO BE ONE OF THE GREATEST SOURCES OF CONFLICT.

Complementary Composition

As a couple, we don't _____ one another, we _____ each other.

- Scientific data on personality confirms this. ¹



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WATCH

[Video: The Differences Between Men & Women](#)

(Credits: Jordan B Peterson Clips; Jordan B. Peterson | Full interview | SVT/TV 2/Skavlan)

What are the benefits of complementing your spouse?

- Your spouse can _____ things you don't.
- They have _____ that you don't.
- They can constructively _____ you and help you _____ God's purposes in your life and your marriage.

Conflict

The marital order can also be a source of conflict. This shouldn't be a surprise to us.

Man's curse was to till the ground by the sweat of his brow. **What was woman's curse?**
(Genesis 3:16)

What does it mean that "her desire will be for her husband"?

Husbands are called to lead well.

²Be shepherds of God's flock that is among you, watching over them not out of compulsion, but because it is God's will; not out of greed, but out of eagerness; ³not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

- 1 Peter 5:2-3

If a husband is not leading well, does this absolve the wife from following?

¹³And if a woman has an unbelieving husband and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him... ¹⁶How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?

- 1 Corinthians 7:13, 16



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- If a husband loves as Christ and leads well, a wife will have much less difficulty following his leadership.
- And if a wife is respectful and willing to follow her husband's lead, he will have much less difficulty loving her unconditionally and caring for her.

REFLECTION How does understanding and walking in my role as a husband/wife enable my partner to grow in their role? What would help me most in this area?

Head & Heart

READ: Ephesians 5:21-33 with a lens toward what you are called to — not what your spouse is.

Each spouse is told to do the thing that does not come _____ to them:

1. Wives

- a. Called to:
- b. Why?

2. Husbands

- a. Called to:
- b. Why?

The Husband as the Head

The Wife as the Heart

A HEAD WITHOUT A HEART CANNOT SURVIVE; NEITHER CAN A HEART WITHOUT A HEAD.



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Wrap-Up

- We discussed the Biblical definition and Scriptural pattern of marriage.
 - It is for more than just companionship; we were designed for productive partnership in God's calling.
 - Spouses help each other fulfill God's call for their lives and in the marriage.
- Marriage is a reflection and foreshadow of God and what's to come:
 - Unity in family with distinct members;
 - A covenant, reflective of God's covenants with mankind;
 - A foreshadowing of the marriage supper of the Lamb.
- God has established a holy order within marriage and the family.
 - The man is the head of the wife and family; the woman is the heart.
 - Both are necessary and have difficult role assignments, but following God's paradigm brings peace, harmony, and power to marriage.

Follow-Through

Meditate

Ephesians 5:21-33

Consider

What does it practically mean to submit to one another (Eph. 5:21)?

Am I respecting and submitting to my husband? Am I loving my wife as Christ loved the church? Cherishing and nurturing her as if she were my own body?

Act

Identify one act this week that would show respect/submission or honor/cherishment/nurture to your spouse, and do it without expecting anything in return!

References

1. *Gender Differences in Personality Traits Across Cultures: Robust and Surprising Findings*, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology:
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/11825676_Gender_Differences_in_Personality_Traits_Across_Cultures_Robust_and_Surprising_Findings



FULL TRANSCRIPT



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ANONYMOUS QUESTIONNAIRE

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We have several topics planned, but we also have the opportunity to tailor our study by taking the brief, anonymous questionnaire above.

Questions & Objectives

- How does God define marriage? What can we learn from the Scriptural pattern?
- Marriage is more than companionship.
- Scripture prescribes a holy order for marriage.

Lesson

God's Plan of Marriage

²³And the man said:

*"This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called 'woman,' for out of man she was taken."*

*²⁴For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife,
and they will become one flesh.*

- Genesis 2:23-24 (BSB)

A Biblical Definition

What is the Biblical definition of marriage?

One man, one woman, in a sacred one-flesh union.

We can add that this is an **earthly union**, meant for **as long as they live**. This is the Scriptural pattern and definition that we see all throughout the Bible.

Just as Jesus did, we'll go back to the beginning:

From the Beginning

*The LORD God also said, "**It is not good for the man to be alone.** I will make for him a suitable helper."*

- Genesis 2:18 (BSB)



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We see a couple things here:

1. It's not good for man to be _____. [alone]
2. Adam needed a suitable _____ [helper]

More than Companionship

Marriage is a **beautiful** way for us to find **lifelong companionship**. And it is absolutely a good and meaningful purpose of marriage.

However, we can get caught up in just "loving love!" and I would encourage us to exercise caution to ensure we **don't reduce marriage** to being solely about companionship, or **elevate God's** good gift to an almost idolatrous level.

The fact is:

- We can be **married and be lonely**; we can lead parallel lives rather than partnering in one life.
- And conversely, you can **be single and not be lonely**. As we learned, singleness is also a good gift!

What errors can we fall into when we view the purpose of marriage as primarily being for companionship?

1. I need someone to _____ [complete] me.

If we view marriage primarily as companionship, we make mistakes like, "My better half... they complete me." It's not about **finding "your other half."**

- This actually stems from a Hellenistic idea – that humans were androgenous beings before birth, who were separated, split in two. The goal was to find your other half.

Marriage is **not two halves** finding one another; **Marriage is two wholes becoming one.**

2. It can be _____ [self-centered] reasoning.

The other reason this logic (marriage as simply for companionship) isn't great, is:

- It's a **self-centered line of thinking** that places the **burden of your** perpetual **happiness** on your partner – which not only **ignores their own autonomy**, self-identity, and potentially their need for fulfillment;
- But what happens the moment they don't "complete" you? Suddenly, you're partner doesn't look like "the one," your **relationship is put at risk** because reality defies your set expectations, and if you've **tied your own identity** to them in such an inseparable way, **even your own sense of identity** is now at risk.

This is why we began this series with the foundational point:



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***MY IDENTITY MUST BE FOUNDED ON AND FOUND IN CHRIST ALONE.

A "Suitable Helper"

The second part of Genesis 2:18 is important, though: *a helper suitable for him*.

- Hebrew, 'ēzer – _____ ["help-meet"] – this is **not an assistant** or an understudy; it's a **partner**.
 - Eve was a help-meet by **coming alongside Adam** in **completing his mission**; **he couldn't do the work alone**.

*Without Eve, Adam wouldn't have been able to reproduce (be fruitful and multiply).
Without Eve, Adam wouldn't have been able to rule (fill, subdue, and have dominion).
Without Eve, Adam wouldn't have been able to work and keep. And this was "not good."
- Dr. Christopher Yuan*

- Hebrew, *kenegdo* – doesn't just mean "suitable," but comparable, complementary, corresponding. It carries the meaning of "alike but opposite of."
 - There's a Hebrew saying, "Midda keneged midda" – *measure for measure*. Eve was a similar measure to Adam.
 - In the creation account of Genesis 1, we see the **theme of separating and binding**:
 - Light and darkness
 - Day and night
 - Sun and moon
 - Morning and evening
 - Waters and heavens
 - Land and sea
 - Plants with seeds, trees with fruit
 - And this carries through with **male and female** – alike, but distinct; separate, but bound together.
 - God created them, male and female, in His image.

This is the **Scriptural pattern and God's paradigm** of marriage. **Anything else is not.**

A Reflection & a Foreshadow

We covered this the other week: A husband and wife marriage reflects the **harmony** of God and the **Trinity**: separate persons, alike but different; working in unity and partnership together for purpose. And those two separate **DNAs** become one DNA in children.

Marriage is a **reflection and foreshadowing** in other ways, too. And **forgive me** for this, but I'm going to try to be as **delicate** and **antiseptic** as possible.



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1. The marriage night is a **covenant** that **reflects God's own** covenants with us: it is a _____ **[blood] covenant**.
 - a. If the couple have followed God's design and **haven't partnered** with anyone before their marriage, **upon consummation**, the **marriage covenant is sealed with blood**. **If you know, you know**. If not, ask Pastor Lane later.
 - b. Think of God's covenants in the Bible:
 - i. **Abrahamic** covenant was initiated with a blood sacrifice and sealed with circumcision – a shedding of blood – as a sign.
 - ii. The **Mosaic** covenant was a blood covenant that required blood to be sprinkled on the tabernacle for the forgiveness of sins.
 - iii. The **New Covenant of Christ** – “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.” – Luke 22:20 (NIV)
 - c. Marriage is a covenant – and a **serious one!**
2. Marriage is an **expression of love**, but it's not the highest ideal of love: _____ **[God]** is.
 - a. It's a **reflection of faithfulness**, a **form of companionship**, but points to the highest ideal of these things: God!
 - b. And this is because:
3. Marriage is an eschatological _____ **[foreshadow]** of what's to come: the Marriage Supper of the Lamb!
 - a. The **ultimate purpose of marriage** is to **point to the reality of Christ and the Church**.
 - b. Ephesians 5:25-27; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 19:7-9

God's Divine Order

God has put in place a **divine order** for all things: **creation**, His **church**, and **individuals**.

*For God is not a God of disorder, but of peace—as in all the churches of the saints.
– 1 Corinthians 14:33 (BSB)*

And likewise, He has an established order for **family** and **marriage**:

What is God's divine order and pattern for the family?

The husband is the head of the family and of the wife. I can feel some of you bristling right now. But I can tell you this:



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GOD'S FAMILIAL ORDER IS THE GREATEST SOURCE OF HARMONY, PEACE, AND POWER WITHIN A MARRIAGE; IT CAN ALSO BE ONE OF THE GREATEST SOURCES OF CONFLICT.

It's not a popular stance in our society, which pushes the **notion that there's no difference** between men and women.

There was that old **Barbie doll jingle**, "We girls can do anything, right, Barbie?"

- Evidently; except hold an opinion without looking for external validation – *right, Barbie?* Within the jingle itself, it undermines its own message. Now, I jest,

Complementary Composition

The Bible presents a **complementarian view** of man and woman and marriage – we don't ____ [**complete**] one another, but we do ____ [**complement**] each other.

Scientific data on personality confirms this.¹

WATCH

[Video: The Differences Between Men & Women](#)

(Credits: Jordan B Peterson Clips; Jordan B. Peterson | Full interview | SVT/TV 2/Skavlan)

What are the benefits of complementing your spouse?

- Your spouse can _____ [**see**] **things** you don't. **Pay attention** to what they say! It may be that they see a **danger** or an **opportunity** that you don't.
- They have **skills, gifts, and talents** that you don't. This is a benefit to the two of you!
- Spouses are called to **constructively challenge and help** one another to **fulfill** God's call and purpose – both as a couple, and in each other's lives as individuals.
 - Your spouse is called to **speak difficult things** to you when necessary, and **support you in overcoming** your struggles.
 - The marital covenant – **till death do you part** – is intended to **provide a safe** space for this growth.

Let's use a real-world example:

- A **good manager won't hire people only like him** or herself; an insecure one will but a good manager identifies areas where they're not as strong (or the team isn't), and then looks for qualified, capable people who have skills and experience in those areas to fill the role.
 - This is what helps create a high performance team – a group of people all utilizing their skills to the best effect; one which is **unified in goal** and purpose but **diverse enough in competencies** to address significant challenges and obstacles.



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- And God has ordered this innately in marriage.

Conflict

The marital order can also be a source of conflict. This shouldn't be a surprise to us: man's curse was to till the ground by the sweat of his brow. *What was woman's curse? (Genesis 3:16)*

- Pain in childbirth
- "your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."
- *What does it mean that "her desire will be for her husband"?*
 - For his **position**. This indicates that **marriage will have leadership struggles** between the man and woman, because the complementary relationship between man and woman that was harmonious has now been damaged by the Fall.
 - NLT says "desire to control your husband"
 - *The word for desire is used only two other times: one in describing sin's desire to "have" Cain – to overpower and obtain authority/rulership over him.*
 - *The other is in Song of Songs, when the Shulamite says her Beloved's desire is for her.*

Now, here's the reality:

- If a husband **leads and husbands well**, a wife has much less difficulty following his leadership.
- In years past, and even today, there are **husbands who abuse this** position, which will drive **conflict** and **despair** within his wife and family.

God didn't call and position the husband as the **head in order to lord it over her** – in fact, quite the opposite: *a wise husband will recruit his wife's opinions and advice.*

Husbands do well to heed the advice that Peter gave to shepherds, as there is a shepherding aspect to "husbandry":

²Be shepherds of God's flock that is among you, watching over them not out of compulsion, but because it is God's will; not out of greed, but out of eagerness; ³not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

- 1 Peter 5:2-3

But if a husband is not leading well, does this absolve the wife from following? No. She's still called to follow and submit to his leadership, unless, of course, it violates the Word of God. Look at 1 Corinthians:



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¹³And if a **woman has an unbelieving husband** and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him... ¹⁶How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?
- 1 Corinthians 7:13, 16

I contend that a **wife's godly submission** and **respect** can change the heart of her husband. And likewise, a **husband's godly headship and love** can change the heart of his wife.

- If a husband loves as Christ and leads well, a wife will have much less difficulty following his leadership.
- And if a wife is respectful and willing to follow her husband's lead, he will have much less difficulty loving her unconditionally and caring for her.

REFLECTION How does understanding and walking in my role as a husband/wife enable my partner to grow in their role? What would help me most in this area?

Head & Heart

READ: Ephesians 5:21-33 provides instruction to husbands and wives. And we don't hear much preaching on this, but I would encourage you to read through these verses – not looking for what your spouse should do, but for what **you** should! Let me summarize a little:

Notably, there is twice as much instruction given to husbands than to wives. Because with authority comes responsibility. But each one is told to **do the thing that does not come** _____ **[naturally]** to them:

1. Wives

- a. Called to: respect their husbands and submit to them, as unto the Lord.
- b. Why? Because love comes more naturally, and respect ministers greatly to a man.

2. Husbands

- a. Husbands are called the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the Church.
- b. Called to:
 - i. **love their wives as Christ** loved the church and gave Himself for her;
 - ii. to love their wives as their own **bodies**;
 - iii. to **nourish** and **cherish** their wives;
 - iv. to love their wives as **themselves**.



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- c. Why? Because respect comes more naturally, and unconditional love, cherishment, and care ministers greatly to a woman.

The husband is the head; the wife is the heart of the family.

The Husband as the Head

- Most folks tend to use the “head of house/wife” phrase to talk about things like logic or direction, etc. That’s good, but I believe the Lord spoke something to me on this (and maybe it’s been said before, but I haven’t heard it):
 - The Bible exhorts women to cover their head in church (1 Corinthians 11:5-6);
 - The **husband, as the head of his wife, covers her**... as Christ covered the church.
 - I’m not saying she’s not responsible for her own sins or absolved simply because she has a husband.
 - But the husband is called to be a **protective covering for his wife** – and to act in her best interests (even when she may not think he is); sacrificing to protect her spiritually, emotionally, and physically – to the laying down of his own life.

The Wife as the Heart

- The wife is the heart of the family.
 - She’s the emotionally in-tune, nurturing center.
 - And she helps guide her husband and **protect him by revealing** what may not be evident to him.

The salient point is this:

A HEAD WITHOUT A HEART CANNOT SURVIVE; NEITHER CAN A HEART WITHOUT A HEAD.

- Probably the two minimum organs required for life, even to this day, are the head and the heart.

Wrap-Up

- We discussed the Biblical definition and Scriptural pattern of marriage.
 - It is for more than just companionship; we were designed for productive partnership in God’s calling.
 - Spouses help each other fulfill God’s call for their lives and in the marriage.



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Follow-Through

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Ephesians 5:21-33

Consider

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Identify one act this week that would show respect/submission or honor/cherishment/nurture to your spouse, and do it without expecting anything in return!

References

1. *Gender Differences in Personality Traits Across Cultures: Robust and Surprising Findings*, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology:
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