

God's Design Marriage

Genesis 2:18-25, Matthew 19:3-6, Ephesians 5:15-33

For the next three weeks we will be looking at God's design for marriage, sexuality, and gender. All three of these are God's creation. He designed them with specific purposes in mind, and what God institutes, he regulates.

Qualifiers:

- Unbelievers have happy marriages, but with a striking resemblance to God's design.
- Our own experiences affect our understanding of marriage, in good ways & bad.
- I'm more concerned with being Biblical than culturally or politically correct.

"In the Bible you have teaching that has been tested by millions of people over centuries and in multiple cultures. Do we have any other resource on marriage like that?" Timothy Keller

Main Idea: God's Design for Marriage Is Revealed in the Scripture

I. God's Design of Marriage

Moses: *"Then the LORD God said, 'It is not good (first time) that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.' Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, 'This at last (finally) is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast (glued, united through covenant) to his wife (groundbreaking for its time), and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.'" Genesis 2:18-25 God created marriage!*

Jesus: *"And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, 'Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?' He answered, 'Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.'" Matthew 19:3-6 God holds the standard for marriage very high.*

Paul: *"And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to*

Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband." Ephesians 5:18-33 Husbands & Wives are to be Christ-like!

"Marriage is a lifelong, monogamous relationship between a man and a woman. According to the Bible, God devised marriage to reflect his saving love for us in Christ, to refine our character, to create stable human community for the birth and nurture of children, and to accomplish all this by bringing the complementary sexes into an enduring whole-life union." Timothy Keller

II. Issues Confusing Marriage in the Modern Mind

- **Ancient (Pre-Enlightenment) Marriage Principles:** Marriage as a duty to improve family standing or security, a social contract which idolizes family priorities.
- **Modern (Post-Enlightenment) Marriage Principles:** Individual happiness is the highest value and romantic fulfillment is the goal.
- **Christian (Timeless) Marriage Principles:** God is the supreme good (not individual or family). God-centered marriage unites feeling/duty/passion/promise.

Modern-Day Issues: Marriage is in sharp decline across western civilization, and there are many reasons, but it is primarily due to the way it is perceived by the modern mind.

- **De-Valuing Marriage:** Adultery, Abuse, No-Fault Divorce, Same-Sex Marriage, Polyamorous Marriages, Cohabitation, Hook-up Culture, Oppression of Spouses, Manipulation, Open Marriages have de-valued marriage.

"Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled."

Hebrews 13:4

- **Over-Valuing Marriage:** We are expecting a spouse to provide for us what only God can provide: Identity, Fulfillment, Purpose.

"Never before in history has there been a society filled with people so idealistic in what they are seeking in a spouse." Timothy Keller

III. Individuals Adversely Affected by the Confusion about Marriage

Married People: If you're thriving, get involved in helping others. If you're just surviving, get help from a pastor or counselor. If you're planning your exit strategy, take it to the Lord.

Single People: You are not incomplete as a person without a spouse. It's okay to desire it, but please put marriage in the proper (biblical) perspective. Don't undervalue it by cohabitation, dating an unbeliever, hooking up, exploiting someone you have no interest in marrying, etc. Don't overvalue it by believing that you will finally be fulfilled, find your identity, or discover your purpose in life by getting married (marriage doesn't do that, only God can).

Single-Again: Divorced, widowed, or abandoned: remember that God has proven in the scriptures that he deeply cares for you. Embrace this season of your life with renewed passion for Christ and His body (church). You are loved, treasured, supported, & valued by your Father in this season of your life. Look to your church family to provide brothers & sisters.

"We are more sinful & flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the very same time we are more loved & accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope." Tim Keller

A transformational relationship is one where we are both fully known and fully loved. We experience that in Christ and can reflect that in marriage.

Sources & Further Reading Opportunities:

- *CSB Study Bible* – Editor Trevin Wax (2017)
- *The Meaning of Marriage* – Timothy & Kathy Keller (2011)
- *A Biblical View of Marriage* – Christopher Ash (www.TGC.org)

