

I. Intro

A. Recap

1. God designed marriage to make us ~~happy~~ Holy.
  - a. Wives submitting to husbands.
  - b. Husbands loving wives.
2. Mystery: Marriage between a man and a woman speaks directly to a union far greater.
  - a. The union between Christ and His Bride (the church).

B. Marriage Crisis in America

1. Biblical Marriage
  - a. **TRC Definition:** Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church.
  - b. Biblical View of Marriage = Covenant

II. Body

A. What is Biblical Covenant?

**Covenant:** *treaty, alliance or pledge (often between two parties that were formerly at enmity with each other).*

1. **Ex:** God promised Abram... that He would make Abraham's descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky (**Gen. 15:5**)
  - a. God decided to bring Abram into covenant.

<sup>9</sup>So He said to him, "Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon". <sup>10</sup>Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. (**Gen. 15:9-10**)

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- b. In covenants between equals, both parties would walk through a wall of blood to solemnize the agreement.

- 2. But not in this covenant (between God and Man).

*<sup>12</sup> Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror and great darkness fell upon him. (Gen. 15:12)*

- a. God passed between the bloody carcasses all by Himself (while Abram sat on the sidelines, unable to lift a finger or help in any way).

*<sup>17</sup> And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. <sup>18</sup> On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram... (Gen. 15:17-18a)*

- 3. Abram was clear about the implications of this incident.

- a. God is the Initiator, Creator and Administrator of every covenant that He enters.
- b. God covenants may have conditions (where the outcome varies depending on human obedience/disobedience).
  - i. But the arranged agreement remains on the table forever, unchanged.
- c. Covenant reflects the character of God.

- 4. Biblical Marriage is not just a promise, it is a covenant.

- a. Reflects the faithfulness and grace of God.
- b. Marriage is more about fidelity and perseverance than it is about compatibility and soulmate dreams.

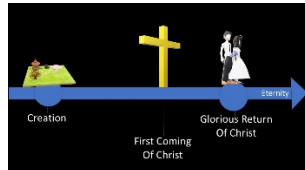
#### B. Biblical Marriage Has Eternal Implications

- 1. All of Redemptive History is moving rapidly toward a glorious, breathtaking, beautiful wedding.

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<sup>6</sup>And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, “Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! <sup>7</sup>Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.” (Rev. 19:6-7)

a. Photo



- b. This marriage feast will jubilantly celebrate the Bridegroom God-King (The Lamb) and His eternal union with His long-awaited Bride.
2. In eternity past God planned, and created for Himself a family... full of sons and daughters.
- a. In the Father’s perfect plan, He arranged a marriage between His Son and a beautiful, mature Bride without spot or wrinkle.
  - b. At the marriage supper of the Lamb, God the Father promised to present a Ready Bride to a Worthy King.
    - i. He initiated the story and He alone vowed to make it come to past.
  - c. The reason God created earthly marriage was to point toward the great eternal marriage between Christ and His Bride, the Church.

C. Marriage was God’s Idea, not Adam’s

1. God did not create Eve to solve Adam’s loneliness problem.

<sup>18</sup>And the LORD God said, “It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.” (Gen. 2:18)

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2. Adam was created in the image and likeness of God Almighty.
    - a. God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) was/ is in perfect communion with Himself. He's never lonely.
    - b. God never needed anything in order to feel complete and validated.
  3. God wasn't lonely. Neither was Adam (in his unfallen state).
    - a. God created Adam with only 1 need: God Himself.
    - b. Every evening (in the cool of the garden) God would sit down and personally hang out with Adam.

D. God is deeply concerned about our happiness.

1. Yahweh is the God of delight.
  - a. He created you that you might experience unadulterated delight in Him (first and foremost).
    - i. *"God is most glorified when we are most satisfied in Him."* (John Piper)
  - b. We've assumed the source of our pleasure and delight would be the person who sleeps in our bed and shares our last names.
2. We were designed to delight in God.
  - a. As we delight in Him, He delights in us.
3. At the end of the Redemptive story is the scene of the Bride meeting her Bridegroom in a Bridechamber.
  - a. She will experience unbridled pleasure that surpasses any feeling ever experienced by the human body.

E. Whether married or single, the call on our life is holiness.

*<sup>11</sup> Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you.<sup>12</sup> And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you, <sup>13</sup> so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints. (1 Thess. 3:11-13)*

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1. Whether married or single... holiness.

<sup>3</sup> *For this is the will of God, your sanctification:... (1 Thess. 4:3a)*

2. For centuries, Christians have viewed celibacy as the ultimate mission field to develop holiness.
3. Again, Holiness is non-negotiable.
  - a. How/ Where we work out this holiness can vary depending on your gift. (1 Cor. 7:7)
    - i. Some in singleness.
    - ii. Many more, in marriage.

### III. Conclusion:

#### A. Marriage Is a great opportunity To Develop Jesus Character

1. Go The Second Mile

<sup>38</sup> *"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' <sup>39</sup> But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. <sup>40</sup> If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. <sup>41</sup> And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. <sup>42</sup> Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away. (Matt. 5:38-42)*

2. Race To Go To Low

<sup>43</sup> *"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' <sup>44</sup> But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you. (Matt. 5:43-44)*

3. Remove Traces of a Critical Spirit

*"Judge not, that you be not judged. <sup>2</sup> For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. <sup>3</sup> And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? (Matt. 7:1-5)*

4. Forgive When Forgiveness is Unfounded

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*<sup>23</sup> Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, <sup>24</sup> leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.*

**(Matt. 5:23-24)**

B. Ultimately, We shall be like Jesus...

1. Sacrificial in Love
2. Patient, Kind, Longsuffering
3. Fights for the Greatness of Others
4. Persistent in His Perseverance
  - a. The Bible never promises a crown (reward) to those who are the most happy.
  - b. Persistence in marriage requires an eternal perspective.

C. Marriage is not the source of the believer's happiness.

1. Marriage is simply a primary proving ground where God produces holiness in the life of the believer.
2. And marriage is God's opportunity to model His persistent, consistent, sacrificial, selfless love to a world who may never see it otherwise.