

Who Gets to Define Relationships?

Built by God
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Main Idea

Culture has its own definitions for marriage, singleness, dating, sexuality, and relationships. But we cannot redefine what we did not create.

God designed relationships, so His Word has the authority to define them. Our relationships are not meant to be built primarily on feelings, convenience, attraction, or cultural expectations. They are meant to be built on truth, covenant, purity, character, and the lordship of Jesus.

“You cannot redefine what you did not create.”

1. Culture Doesn't Get to Redefine Marriage

Marriage was God's design before governments, nations, denominations, or courthouses existed. Genesis 2 establishes marriage as a covenant between a man and woman, and Jesus points back to this same design in Matthew 19.

Biblical marriage is more than two people falling in love. A contract asks, “What am I getting?” A covenant asks, “What am I willing to give?”

Marriage requires patience, sacrifice, forgiveness, humility, repentance, and service. It is not two perfect people finding each other. It is two imperfect people keeping Jesus at the center.

Ephesians 5 points to Christ's sacrificial love for the church as the standard for marriage. Kingdom leadership is not about demanding control. It means being willing to sacrifice, serve, repent, and lead toward Jesus.

Protecting the covenant also means guarding the heart and pursuing purity. Pornography, secrecy, lust, and comparison undermine the intimacy God designed for marriage. When sin enters a marriage, the answer is not hiding it but bringing it into the light, seeking help, and fighting for freedom.

“Your spouse should never have to compete with the screen.”

A strong marriage is not one that never encounters storms. It is one that knows where to run when storms come.

Scriptures:

Genesis 2:20–24

“A man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.”

Ephesians 5:25

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.”

Matthew 5:28

Jesus addresses lust as an issue of the heart, not merely outward behavior.

2. Culture Doesn't Get to Redefine Singleness

Culture can make singleness feel like something is missing, and sometimes the church can unintentionally reinforce that idea.

But life does not begin when another person chooses you.

Our identity, value, purpose, and wholeness are ultimately found in Jesus. A spouse can encourage and walk beside us, but another person was never designed to carry the weight of being our savior.

“People make terrible saviors.”

Singleness does not have to become a waiting room for real life. It can be a season to grow, serve, pray, strengthen friendships, develop your calling, pursue healing, and become rooted in Jesus.

Rather than only asking God for the right person, allow Him to shape you into the right person.

Loneliness should not lower our standards or cause us to ignore character and wisdom.

“Don't let loneliness choose what wisdom would reject.”

“Waiting is not wasted when God is working.”

Scripture:

Colossians 2:10

“In Christ you have been brought to fullness.”

3. Culture Doesn't Get to Redefine Dating

The most important question is not simply who you are dating. The deeper question is: **Who is Lord while you're dating?**

Scripture does not use modern dating terminology, but it gives clear principles concerning holiness, purity, wisdom, character, and covenant.

Culture emphasizes chemistry. Scripture calls us to examine character.

Instead of asking how far a relationship can go, Christians should ask how much the relationship can honor Jesus.

“Don't ask for the benefits of covenant without the commitment of covenant.”

Purity is not punishment. God's boundaries are designed for our protection.

Character also matters more than chemistry when determining whether a relationship can become a healthy lifelong covenant. Attraction cannot tell you whether someone loves Jesus, serves others, receives correction, apologizes, prays, or consistently moves you toward Christ.

“Chemistry will get you in the relationship, but character will determine whether it can survive.”

Scripture also warns against being unequally yoked. Dating is not merely choosing someone to spend time with. It may mean choosing someone who will eventually stand beside you through raising children, financial pressure, sickness, loss, and circumstances you cannot predict.

You need more than someone who can hold your hand. You need someone who knows how to call on Jesus.

Scriptures:

1 Thessalonians 4:3

“It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality.”

2 Corinthians 6:14

“Do not be yoked together with unbelievers.”

Jesus Must Be Lord

Jesus does not simply want to be included in our relationships. He is Lord over them.

Jesus first in who we date.

Jesus first in how we date.

Jesus first in our marriages.

Jesus first in our desires.

Jesus first in our futures.

If Jesus is not Lord over a relationship, the relationship can eventually become lord over us. We begin expecting another person to provide our identity, heal our loneliness, make us whole, or become our source.

“People make terrible gods.”

Before you are a husband or wife, boyfriend or girlfriend, you belong to Jesus.

Your first relationship is with Jesus.

Scripture:

Matthew 6:33

“Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness.”

Build According to the Blueprint

God is the architect, and His Word gives us the blueprint.

Marriage is still His design. Singleness is under His lordship. Dating is under His lordship. Our bodies and futures belong to Him.

Culture may call God's design outdated, but the Architect still knows how the house was designed to stand.

When culture says build on feelings, **build on truth.**

When culture says build on convenience, **build on covenant.**

When culture says build on lust, **build on purity.**

When culture says build on self, **build on Jesus.**

God's design is still good.

Key Takeaways

- God created relationships, so He has the authority to define them.
- Marriage is a covenant that requires sacrifice, service, forgiveness, and faithfulness.
- Our identity and wholeness must ultimately be found in Jesus, not another person.
- Singleness is not a waiting room for real life.
- Loneliness should not cause us to abandon wisdom or biblical standards.
- Dating should prioritize character, purity, wisdom, and spiritual direction over chemistry alone.
- God's boundaries are designed for our protection.

- Jesus must remain Lord over every relationship.
- Healthy relationships are built according to God's design rather than cultural expectations.

Standout Lines

"You cannot redefine what you did not create."

"Your spouse should never have to compete with the screen."

"People make terrible saviors."

"Don't let loneliness choose what wisdom would reject."

"Waiting is not wasted when God is working."

"Don't ask for the benefits of covenant without the commitment of covenant."

"Purity is not punishment. Purity is protection."

"Chemistry will get you in the relationship, but character will determine whether it can survive."

"People make terrible gods."

"Your first relationship is with Jesus."

Reflection

1. What relationship or area of my life have I allowed culture, feelings, or personal preference to define instead of Scripture?
2. Am I asking another person to provide something that I should ultimately be finding in Jesus?
3. What boundary, conversation, act of repentance, or step of obedience would help me build my relationships according to God's design?