

SESSION 2

The Fundamental Definition of Marriage

Review: The Fundamental Foundations of a Godly Family

1. Salvation: You must be in Christ, Christ must be in You
2. Association: You must be in association and active participation with the church
3. Sanctification: You must be continually and persistently pursuing holiness & godliness
4. Submission: You must be submissive to Christ and others

Before we dive into the commands for all born-again, children of God in the marriage relationship, we need to first examine the origins, purpose, and definition of marriage, as ordained by God in His word.

In his book, “When Sinners Say I Do,” Dave Harvey states, “God created the marriage “program,” wrote the “operating manual,” and is faithful to explain it. He is the one and only reliable and trustworthy Authority on the subject of marriage. As it’s “Inventor,” He knows how it works and how to make it last. As the Lord over marriage, He has given all we need for life and godliness – and marriage – in His word. The Bible is the foundation for a thriving marriage.”

“Marriage was not just invented by God, it belongs to God. He has a unique claim over its design, purpose, and goals. It actually exists for him more than it exists for you and me and our spouses.”¹

Today we’re going to look at the Biblical definition of marriage laid out by the Inventor and Lord of marriage.

Definition: the act of defining, or of making something definite, distinct, or clear. to state or set forth the meaning of; To explain or identify the nature or essential qualities; to describe; to fix or lay down clearly and definitely; specify distinctly; to determine or fix the boundaries or extent of something

I. THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPALS OF MARRIAGE

Marriage is an exclusive and unique relationship established, orchestrated, and ordained by God Himself, before the existence of sin. God, in His perfect wisdom, created Adam with a need for a helper that would correspond only to him. He took a piece of Adam, and formed Eve with His own hands from Adam’s rib. Then brought Eve to Adam, and presented her to him as his perfectly suited companion and counterpart. Yahweh God, the Creator of all things very good and perfect, created marriage very good and perfect. And for this reason, the Lord says, “a man shall leave his father and his mother, and cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.”

Marriage was also created by God, so that man could better understand the love that He has for us, and that Christ has for the church. In the Old Testament, the Lord described His relationship with Israel through the illustration of marriage (Hosea; Isaiah 62:4). In the New Testament, the Lord describes His relationship with the church through the model of marriage (Ephesians 5:21-33). Marriage is a unique relationship, because there is no other relationship we can know or experience that better explains the love that God has for His chosen people.

In our study, it is our desire to uncover the biblical foundations for marriage, so that we can strive to have marriages that glorify God and exemplify the love of Jesus Christ. Our desire is to strengthen and fortify

¹ Dave Harvey, “When Sinners Say I Do,” p. 23-25.

our marriages so that we are faithful witnesses of Christ in the home, in the world, and in the church. Our desire is to uncover the sin, misunderstanding, and unfaithfulness that is inhibiting unity and love within our homes, and to retrain, renew, revive our relationships, so that God is glorified and we are blessed. ²

The Relationship of Marriage:

A. Marriage is a **PROFOUND** relationship established by God for His glory

It is the most fundamental and basic institution in society.

Genesis 2:18,22 *Then Yahweh God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him... And Yahweh God fashioned the rib, which He had taken from the man, into a woman, and He brought her to the man.*

Ephesians 5:31-32 *"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great, but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.*

"Marital union was designed by God to illustrate gospel union with Christ. At creation, God ordained marital union so that his people could better understand the faithful union with Christ he would one day reveal."³

B. Marriage is a **COVENANT** relationship.

It is a solemn and binding arrangement that should not be minimized or manipulated.

Proverbs 2:17 *[the adulteress] "Who forsakes the close companion of her youth And forgets the covenant of her God*

Malachi 2:14 *"...Yahweh has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant."*

C. Marriage is a **GOOD** relationship.

Genesis 2:18 *"Then Yahweh God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him"*

Proverbs 18:22 *"He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from Yahweh.*

D. Marriage is an **EXCLUSIVE** and **PURE** relationship.

² Many concepts taken from "Building Marriages God's Way," by Faith Resources (Faith Church, Lafayette, IN). www.frlafayette.org

³ Paul Shirley, The Christian Home, p. 45.

Exodus 20:14,17 *“You shall not commit adultery... You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife...”*

Proverbs 5:15-17 *“Drink water from your own cistern and fresh water from your own well. Should your springs be dispersed abroad, streams of water in the streets? Let them be for you alone and not for strangers with you.”*

It involves a commitment to purity in several areas:

○ In thought

This includes literature, TV, movies, beach, etc...

Matthew 5:27-30 - *“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery’; but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. But if your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell.*

Job 31:1 - *“I have cut a covenant with my eyes; How then could I gaze at a virgin?*

○ In action

You must not promote unfaithfulness in yourself or others

You must not associate with immoral people who profess Christ

You must be wise by avoiding the appearance of evil.

Ephesians 5:3-4

...sexual immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; nor filthiness and foolish talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting

1 Corinthians 5:11-13

I am writing to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is a sexually immoral person, or greedy, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler—not even to eat with such a one... Remove the wicked man from among yourselves.

○ In affections

You must guard against receiving even emotional or visual satisfaction from someone other than your spouse.

You must channel all of your desires toward your spouse.

You must be very careful with touching.

You must be careful about complimenting someone of the opposite sex who is not your spouse.
You must avoid joking about sexual matters with others.
You must remind your spouse often that you are committed to keeping your vows.
You must spend large quantities of time with your spouse.
You must do all you can within God's will to please your spouse.
Song of Solomon 2:7; 2:5; 8:4 - *That you do not arouse or awaken my love Until she pleases."*

E. Marriage is a PERMANENT relationship.

"At the heart of God's design and desire for marriage is that it is a permanent union between a man and a woman. The union of a man and a woman before God is the deepest and most profound truth of Christian marriage period a husband and wife are so joined through the covenant of marriage that their spiritual and physical well-being are inextricably linked together by God. There is no horizontal relationship closer or deeper in God's eyes than that of a married couple."⁴

Matthew 19:3-9 *And some Pharisees came to Jesus, testing Him and saying, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all?" And He answered and said, "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined 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 no man separate." They *said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give her a certificate of divorce and send her away?" He *said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery."*

1 Corinthians 7:10-11 *But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not leave her husband (but if she does leave, she must remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not divorce his wife.*

1 Corinthians 7:12-16 *But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he must not divorce her. And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, she must not divorce her husband. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified*

⁴ Paul Shirley, The Christian Home, p. 40.

through her believing husband. For otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy. Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave. The brother or the sister is not enslaved in such cases, but God has called us to peace. For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife?

Romans 12:18 *if possible, so far as it depends on you, being at peace with all men*

Look at marriage as if you are on the 10th floor of a building with no exits and a fire breaks out. You have no other options except to put out the fire.

F. Marriage is a PASSIONATE relationship.

Proverbs 5:18-19 *“Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth. As a loving hind and a graceful doe, let her breasts satisfy you at all times; be exhilarated always with her love.”*

Song of Solomon (From SOS 4) *“Behold, you are beautiful, my darling, Behold, you are beautiful! You are altogether beautiful, my darling, And there is no blemish in you. You have made my heart beat faster, my sister, my bride; You have made my heart beat faster with a single glance of your eyes, With a single strand of your necklace. How beautiful is your love, my sister, my bride!”*

II. THE FUNDAMENTAL PURPOSE OF MARRIAGE

A. Marriage provides an opportunity for unique COMPANIONSHIP.

Genesis 2:18 *“suitable helper” = a companion who completes and complements*

Genesis 2:24 *Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother, and cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh*

B. Marriage provides the framework for multiplying a godly HERITAGE.

Genesis 1:28 *God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it;*

Genesis 9:1 *And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth*

Psalms 127:3-5 *Behold, children are an inheritance of Yahweh,
The fruit of the womb is a reward.
Like arrows in the hand of a warrior,
So are the children of one’s youth.*

How blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them

Psalm 78:1-8

*We will not conceal them from their children,
But recount to the generation to come the praises of Yahweh,
And His strength and His wondrous deeds that He has done...
He commanded our fathers
That they should teach them to their children,
That the generation to come might know,
even the children yet to be born,
That they may arise and recount them to their children,
That they should set their confidence in God
And not forget the deeds of God,
But observe His commandments*

Proverbs 1:8-9

*Hear, my son, your father's discipline
And do not abandon your mother's instruction;
For they are a garland of grace for your head
And ornaments about your neck.*

C. Marriage provides a PLATFORM for ministry and evangelism.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

“Hear, O Israel! Yahweh is our God, Yahweh is one! You shall love Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall speak of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as phylacteries between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

In both the OT and NT, God uses marriage to describe the relationship between Him and His people.

Exodus 19:4-6

The Lord made Israel His own possession through covenant

Ezekiel 16, 23

Israel forsook her marriage and became a harlot

Hosea

Harlotry; Divorce; Re-marriage

Hosea 2:19-20

And I will betroth you to Me forever;
Indeed, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice,
In lovingkindness and in compassion,
And I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness.
Then you will know Yahweh.

Isaiah 62:4-5

It will no longer be said to you, “Forsaken,”
Nor to your land will it any longer be said, “Desolate”;
But you will be called, “My delight is in her,”
And your land, “Married”;
For Yahweh takes pleasure in you,
And to Him your land will be married.

For as a young man marries a virgin,
So your sons will marry you;
And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride,
So your God will rejoice over you.

Romans 9-11 NT description of the whole relationship

Marriage gives witness to the relationship between Christ and His bride, the church.
“Truth based marriages are inherently centered on Christ.”⁵

Ephesians 5:22-32 “...I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church”

III. THE FUNDAMENTAL PATTERN FOR MARRIAGE

Wayne Mack calls it God’s Blueprint⁶

*Genesis 2:18-25 (LSB)

Then Yahweh God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.” And out of the ground Yahweh God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and He brought each to the man to see what he would call it; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. And the man gave names to all the cattle and to the birds of the sky and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him. So Yahweh God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. And Yahweh God fashioned the rib, which He had taken from the man, into a woman, and He brought her to the man. Then the man said,

“This one finally is bone of my bones,

And flesh of my flesh;

This one shall be called Woman,

Because this one was taken out of Man.”

Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother, and cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

This statement about marriage is the only one that God mentions 4x in the Bible.
(Gen. 2:24; Mt. 19:5; Mk. 10:7-8; Eph. 5:31)

This statement is God’s all-time master plan for a God-honoring and good marriage.

Therefore a man shall **leave** his father and his mother, and **cleave** to his wife; and they shall become **one flesh**.

A. God’s pattern for marriage directs husbands and wives to **“LEAVE”** their fathers and mothers.

⁵ Dave Harvey, When Sinners Say I Do, p. 22.

⁶ Wayne Mack, Strengthening Your Marriage, p. 1-10.

This does not mean that you abandon or utterly forsake them (Ex. 20:12; Mk. 7:9-13; 1 Tim. 5:8) or that you must make a geographic move. You can “leave” but still live next door. You can live 2,000 miles away, and still not “leave.”

It does mean, however, that your relationship to your parents must be radically changed. “Many marriages never enjoy the practical blessings of union because they fail to leave their old manner of life behind... Your allegiance must transfer from the influence, traditions, and expectations of your extended family to a new shared life with the one to whom you are now married.”⁷

- You must be more concerned about your spouse’s ideas, opinions, and practices than those of your parents
- You must not be spiritually, emotionally, financially, dependent on your parents (counsel is great. Dependence is not).
- You must eliminate any bad attitudes towards your parents, or you will still be tied emotionally to them.
- you must stop trying to change your spouse simply because your parents do not like something about them.

You must make the husband and wife relationship your primary & priority relationship.

- Still concerned about being good son/daughter but the priority is being a faithful spouse
- If you are a parent, your goal should be to prepare your children to leave, not stay. If your life is wrapped around them, or you are guiding them to be dependent upon you (as a parent), then you are crippling your child
- “Children do not need indulgent parents who continually neglect each other period they need parents who will demonstrate how to face and solve problems.” – Wayne Mack, “Strengthening Your Marriage (page 3).
- Prepare yourselves for when your children will leave by cultivating common interests, learning to do things together, and deepening your friendship with each other
- when your children marry, do not try and run their lives. Allow the young husband to be the head of his home, to make decisions for himself, to look to his wife and not to you as his primary helper. Encourage your daughter to depend upon her husband, and not you for guidance, help, companionship, and affection.

B. God’s pattern for marriage directs husbands and wives to “CLEAVE” to one another.

God’s kind of marriage involves a total and irrevocable commitment of two people to each other.

Marriage is a covenant or contract to which a husband and wife are bound for life.

“Cleave” = to be fastened together/to cling or adhere/ to glue or cement together

Marriage is a permanent commitment to faithfully cleave to one another in selfless, submissive, sacrificial love, in the fear of the Lord.

⁷ Paul Shirley, The Christian Home, p. 42.

“You are spiritually “gorilla glued” to your spouse... You must embrace the covenantal, exclusive, spiritual, physical, and practical union. You must share every area of your life without holding back. You must recognize that by God's design there is no relationship, other than your relationship with Christ, that is closer than the relationship created through marriage. In fact, marital union joins two souls so closely together that it mirrors the spiritual intimacy of your relationship with Christ.”⁸

- In many ways, marriage is similar to becoming a Christian
- When a person becomes a Christian, he leaves his former way of life, and turns to Christ.
- He commits himself fully to Christ. The very essence of saving faith is a personal commitment to Christ in which a person promises to trust Christ faithfully and completely in all circumstances, and to serve Christ faithfully and diligently, regardless of how he feels or what problems arise.

C. God’s pattern for marriage directs husbands and wives to **“WEAVE”** together (in a one flesh relationship)

At its most elemental level, this is referring to sexual relations or physical union. (1 Cor. 6:16)
“...do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body with her? For He says, “The two shall become one flesh.”

Comprehensively, this “one flesh” idea refers to the goal of experiencing total intimacy and deep unity by the **total sharing** of the **total person** with another until death.

“Marital union requires sharing every area of your life with your spouse. You don't lose your individuality or your personal responsibility before God when you enter into this union, but your spouse does become a part of your identity and your responsibility before God.”⁹

- Husbands and wives should share everything with one another – their bodies, possessions, insights, problems, aspirations, successes, sufferings, abilities, etc...
 - Husbands and wives should be as concerned about the other’s needs as they are about their own. (Eph. 5:28; Prov. 31:12,27)
 - Husbands and wives should manifest this one flesh concept in practical, tangible, and demonstrable ways. It’s not an abstract concept or a “spiritual” reality. It is a concrete evident existence.
 - Becoming one flesh means complete unity with diversity. The husband and wife may be different in many respects, but God created you with differences, and orchestrated your union so that you would compliment and complete one another as you sacrificially love each other.
 - Sin disrupts and destroys the “one flesh” unity and intimacy of marriage. In order to have unity in marriage, the husband and wife must practice honesty, transparency, and humility. We cannot “cover up” and hide in shame one another, like Adam and Eve.
- We must confess our sins to one another.
 - We must forgive one another

⁸ Paul Shirley, The Christian Home, p. 42.

⁹ Paul Shirley, The Christian Home, p. 42.

- We must mortify selfishness and pride
- We must live lives of holiness, righteousness, and transparency

“There are literally thousands of books that tell you all the tips, tricks, and secrets to a well maintained marriage. According to Paul, you can throw most of them straight in the trashcan. Date nights, marriage journals, intimacy tips, and psychological techniques cannot sustain your marriage. The most important technique for marital faithfulness is not a technique at all, it is simple submission. Husbands and wives maintain marital union by submitting their lives to the Spirit and submitting their roles in marriage to God's design. If you want to work on ways to improve your marriage then you must begin with humble, faith filled submission to your role, and everything else required for a healthy marriage is just growing as Christians together. This is why the New Testament focuses on your growth and sanctification rather than tips and tricks for marriage period if you honor your role in marriage and honor Christ with your life, your union will be well-maintained.¹⁰

Homework:

The Christian Home Reading:

Read the Chapter 4 “Vital Union” (11 pages)

Go over Chapter 4 discussion questions with your spouse.

1. **Prayer:** Pray for your spouse every day this week
2. **The Word:** Memorize Genesis 2:22-24
3. **The Date:** Go on a date with your spouse this week
 - a. Discuss God’s Fundamental Pattern for Marriage (LEAVE, CLEAVE, WEAVE)
 - b. Reflect on ways you have failed to weave together into “one flesh” in total intimacy and total unity
 - i. What parts of your relationship need weaving back together?
 - ii. What are you not sharing with one another, that needs to be shared in order to have complete unity, transparency, honesty in your relationship?
 - iii. Do you have oneness with your bodies, possessions, insights, problems, aspirations, successes, sufferings, abilities, etc?
 - c. Write down 3 ways you will commit to weave together in deeper unity moving forward
 - d. Tell each other at least five things you love and appreciate about them
4. **Extra Credit:** Listen to “Pride and Humility” by Stuart Scott & identify Manifestations of Pride and Humility using the linked notes
 - a. **SERMON** –
 - b. <https://gbcmt.org/sermons/more-media/?sapurl=LytjMzBjL2xiL21pLytmNDU2YTVIP2JyYW5kaW5nPXRYdWUmZW1iZWQ9dHJ1ZSZyZWNIbnRSb3V0ZT1hcHAud2ViLWFwcC5saWJyYXJ5Lmxc3QmcmVjZW50Um91dGVUbHVnPSUyQjQwYWVviZDE=>
 - c. **NOTES** –
 - d. <https://gbcmt.org/Sermons/Resources/Conferences/Biblical%20Counseling%20Conference%202015/Notes/BCC15015%20-%20Pride%20and%20Humility%20in%20One%27s%20Life%20-%20notes.pdf>

¹⁰ Paul Shirley, The Christian Home, p. 46.