

God's Blueprint for Marriage

UNITY THROUGH UNDERSTANDING GOD'S PURPOSE FOR MARRIAGE

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- A. Five verses of Scripture—Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5; Mark 10:7, 8; Ephesians 5:31.
 - 1. God makes the same statement about marriage four times.
 - a. Once in the Old Testament. Three times in the New Testament.
 - b. Once before man fell into sin. Three times after man fell into sin.
 - 2. This statement contains God's marital purpose for perfect man and for sinful man. This statement contains God's all time blueprint for a good marriage.
- B. A good blueprint is just as necessary for a good marriage as it is for a building project.
 - 1. Today, there are many unhappy, unfulfilling marriages not only among non-Christians, but also among Christians.
 - 2. This unhappiness is caused to a large extent by the failure of people to pay attention to God's blueprint for marriage.
 - 3. What then is God's blueprint for marriage? What does God's kind of marriage involve?
- I. God's blueprint for marriage directs husbands and wives to leave their fathers and mothers.
 - A. What this does not mean:
 - 1. Does not mean abandon or utterly forsake. Compare Exodus 20:12; Mark 7:9-13; I Timothy 5:8.
 - 2. Does not necessitate a great geographical change.
It is possible, although perhaps more difficult, to leave your father and mother and still live next door. Likewise it is possible to live a thousand miles away from you parents and not

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leave them. In fact, you may not have left your parents even though they are dead.

B. To leave your parents means that your relationship to your parents must be radically changed.

1. It means that you must be more concerned about your mate's ideas, opinions, and practices than your parents'.
2. It means that you must not be slavishly dependent on your parents for affection, approval, assistance, and counsel.
3. It means that you must eliminate any bad attitudes towards your parents, or you will be emotionally tied to them regardless of how far you move from them.
4. It means that you must stop trying to change your mate simply because your parents don't like him the way he is.
5. It means that the husband and wife relationship is the priority human relationship.
 - a. Yes, you should be concerned about being a good son/daughter—or mother/father, but more concerned about being a good husband/wife than about being a good son/daughter or father/mother. Children do not need indulgent parents who continually neglect each other. They need parents who will demonstrate how to face and solve problems.
 - b. If you are parents, your goal should be to prepare your children to leave, not to stay. Your life must not be wrapped around them or you may make them emotional cripples.
 - c. You should be preparing yourselves for the day when your children leave by cultivating common interests, learning to do things together, and deepening your friendship with each other.
 - d. When your children have married, you must not try to run their lives. You must allow the young husband to be the head of the house, making decisions for himself, looking to his wife as his primary responsibility and helper. You must encourage your daughter to depend upon her husband, not you, for guidance, help, companionship, and affection.

II. God's blueprint for marriage directs husbands and wives to cleave to one another.

A. In our day many young couples seem to marry with the thought that if their marriage doesn't work out they can always get a divorce.

1. When they get married they vow to be faithful until death,

but under their breath, they add, “unless our problems are too great.”

2. Indeed, some have suggested that we should have to renew our marriage license every year even as we do our automobile license.
 3. For them, marriage is a matter of convenience, of chance, and may be very temporary. It all depends on how the cards fall out.
- B. But God says, “No, that’s not the way I planned it. I planned marriage to be a permanent relationship. I want the husband and wife to cleave to one another.”
1. Marriage is not a matter of chance, but choice.
 2. It is not merely a matter of convenience, but obedience.
 3. It is not a matter of how the cards fall out, but of how much you are willing and determined to work at it.
- C. A good marriage is based more on commitment than feeling or physical attraction.
1. According to Malachi 2:14 and Proverbs 2:17, marriage is an irrevocable covenant or contract to which we are bound.
 2. Therefore, when two people get married they promise that they will be faithful to each other regardless of what happens.
 - a. The wife promises that she will be faithful even if the husband is afflicted with buldges, baldness, bunions, and bifocals; even if he loses his health, his wealth, his job, his charm; even if someone more exciting comes along.
 - b. The husband promises to be faithful even if the wife loses her beauty and appeal; even if she is not as neat and tidy or as submissive as he would like her to be; even if she doesn’t satisfy his sexual desires completely; even if she spends money foolishly or is a terrible cook.
- C. Marriage means that a husband and wife enter into a relationship for which they accept full responsibility, in which they commit themselves to each other regardless of what problems arise.
- D. In many ways getting married is like becoming a Christian.
1. When a person becomes a Christian he leaves his former way of life, his self-righteousness, his own efforts to save himself and turns to Christ, who died in the place and stead of sinners.
 2. In this act of turning to Christ, he commits himself 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 and to serve Christ faithfully and diligently regardless of how he feels or what problems arise

(compare Rom. 10:9, 10; Acts 16:31; Phil. 3:7,8; I Thess. 1:9, 10).

3. Just so, God's kind of marriage involves a total and irrevocable commitment of two people to each other.
 - a. God's kind of marriage involves cleaving to one another in sickness and health, poverty and wealth, pleasure and pain, good times and bad times, agreements and disagreements.
 - b. God's kind of marriage means that people know that they must face problems, discuss them, seek God's help in them, resolve them rather than run from them, because there is no way out. They are committed to one another for life. They must cleave to one another.

III. God's blueprint for marriage involves becoming one flesh.

- A. At its most elementary level, this is referring to sexual relations or physical union.
 1. Compare I Corinthians 6:16.
 2. Within the bounds of marriage sexual relations are holy, good, and beautiful, but if they are entered into apart from the "leaving and cleaving," they are ugly, degrading, and sinful (compare Heb. 13:4).
- B. But becoming one flesh involves more than the sexual act.
 1. Indeed, the marriage act is the symbol or culmination of a more complete oneness. The marriage act is a symbol of a total oneness, of a total giving of yourself to another person. Consequently, if the more complete oneness is not a reality, sexual relations lose their meaning.
 2. One definition of marriage that I really like is: Marriage is a total commitment and a total sharing of the total person with another person until death.
 - a. God's intention is that when two people get married they should share everything—their bodies, their possessions, their insights, their ideas, their abilities, their problems, their successes, their sufferings, their failures, etc.
 - b. A husband and wife are a team and whatever either of them does must be for the sake of the other person or at least it must not be to the detriment of the other person. Each must be as concerned about the other person's needs as he is about his own (Eph. 5:28; Prov. 31:12, 27).
 - c. Husbands and wives are no more two, but one flesh, and this one flesh concept must manifest itself in practical, tangible, demonstrable ways. God does not intend it to

- be merely an abstract concept or idealistic theory, but a concrete reality. Total intimacy and deep unity are part of God's blueprint for marriage.
3. Total intimacy and deep unity, however, does not mean total uniformity or sameness.
 - a. My body is made up of many different parts. My hands don't do the work of my feet. My heart doesn't do the work of my liver.
 - b. There is a great diversity in my body and yet there is unity. The parts of my body look different and even act differently, but when normal each part works for the benefit of the other parts, or at least one part doesn't deliberately try to hurt the other parts.
 - c. Similarly, husbands and wives may be very different in some respects, but they must not allow their differences to hinder their unity, because God's purpose in marriage is total unity.
 - C. But you know as well as I do that total oneness is not easily achieved.
 1. Certainly the basic hindrance to the achievement of oneness is our sinfulness.
 - a. In Genesis 2:2, immediately after God spoke of the husband and wife becoming one flesh, the Scripture says, "And the man and his wife were *both naked* and were *not ashamed*."
 - b. The nakedness of Adam and Eve is not a recommendation of public nudity. This happened before sin entered the world and before there were any other people around. Adam was the only human being who saw Eve naked, and Eve was the only person who saw Adam.
 2. But that was before they had sinned. After they sinned we read that "the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings." As soon as sin entered the picture, they began to cover up.
 - a. This attempt to cover up was certainly an evidence of their awareness of their sinfulness before God. Immediately and foolishly, they tried to hide their sin from God.
 - b. Still further, when sin entered the picture, they began to hide from each other. When sin entered the picture, their openness, transparency, and total oneness was destroyed.

3. And just as sin entered and hindered the oneness of Adam and Eve, so our sinfulness is still the great barrier to marital oneness today.
 - a. Sometimes marital oneness is destroyed by the sin of selfishness.
 - b. Sometimes by pride.
 - c. Sometimes by bitterness or ingratitude or stubbornness or unwholesome speech or neglect or impatience or harshness or cruelty.
 - d. It was sin that destroyed the total oneness of Adam and Eve, and it is sin that destroys the oneness of husbands and wives today.
4. That brings us to our need of Jesus Christ.
 - a. First of all, we need Jesus Christ to bring us into a right relationship with God. (Compare Rom. 3:10-23; Isa. 59:2; Col. 1:21-23; Eph. 1:7; 2:13-21; II Cor. 5:21; I Pet. 3:18.)
 - b. But not only do we need Jesus Christ to bring us into a right relationship with God, we also need Jesus Christ to help us to be rightly related to each other. Jesus Christ came into the world to destroy the barriers that exist between man and man as well as between man and God. He breaks down the barriers that exist between men. He abolishes the enmity and makes men one in Himself (Eph. 2:14-16; Gal. 3:28). He alone can take a sinful selfish man and woman and enable them to leave father and mother, to cleave to one another, and to become one flesh.
 - c. If therefore you are going to experience the total oneness that God says is essential to a good marriage, you need to come to Jesus Christ. He breaks down barriers. He destroys middle walls that divide. He cleanses from sin. He breaks the power of reigning sin. He sets the prisoner free. He gives men the Holy Spirit, who produces in them the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control. He gives them the Holy Spirit who enables sinful men and women to leave father and, mother, to cleave to one another, and to become one flesh.