

BIBLICAL MARRIAGE

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CHAPTER 1

READING THE BIBLE

Many fine books exist on the subject of marriage, and can be very edifying, but in this study we are going to concentrate on what the Bible says about marriage. As such we must follow the basic rules of Biblical interpretation:

1. God's word is our final authority, so everything we think, say, and do must be governed by it. It is not read in light of what we want, we are viewed in light of it. What it says is thus of primary importance.
2. Read a passage in context: Read passages not verses, and even then read them in the context of the chapter, book, and the rest of the Bible. Scriptures do not contradict each other but rather clarify and qualify each other so we can better understand exactly what God means. The goal is to better understand what God wants not to seek our own.
3. Interpretation of a passage depends on the grammatical and literary rules standard for the type of literature being read: in other words read poetry as poetry, parable as parable, history as history, and so on. Poetry for instance uses constructs such as trees clapping hands to speak of the universal greatness and joy at what God does, it does not actually mean they clap or have hands.
4. Historical context can be helpful in understanding the background but must never overrule the clear statements of the text.

The Bible has numerous passages that deal with marriage. We will go through the major ones:

1. Genesis 1:26-28
2. Genesis 2:18-25
3. Deuteronomy 24:1-4
4. Proverbs 5:15-23
5. Proverbs 18:22
6. Proverbs 19:13-14
7. Proverbs 31:10-31
8. Song of Songs (Song of Solomon)
9. Matthew 5:31-32
10. Matthew 19:3-12
11. Mark 10:1-12
12. 1 Corinthians 7

13. Ephesians 5:21-33
14. Colossians 3:18-19
15. Titus 2:4-5
16. 1 Peter 3:1-7

CHAPTER 2

IN THE BEGINNING

2.1 CREATION OF MARRIAGE

²⁶ And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. ²⁸ And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

Genesis 1:26-28(KJV)

Verse 26 indicates that man is created in God's image, and the pronoun is plural, thus indicating that mankind is intended.¹ This is straightforward in the new testament when, for instance, Paul speaks of there being no more male or female. Paul was not denying the obvious differences or even role distinction, which he clearly teaches, rather he was affirming the equal worth of both. Neither male nor female is superior to the other in the Bible.

Jesus interprets verse 27 in Matthew 19 as indicating marriage was intended to be permanent. We will see this more in the next section on divorce.

God commanded mankind to be fruitful and multiply and to rule. The dominion command thus falls on the woman as well. She is to take part in the ruling with her husband. He is the king and she the queen, not he the king and she the maid.

¹⁸ And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. ¹⁹ And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. ²⁰ And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

²¹ And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; ²² And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. ²³ And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. ²⁴ Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. ²⁵ And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Genesis 2:18-25(KJV)

¹As further proof that male and female is intended, in verse 27 the plural is connected with male and female. Verse 28 connects them with reproduction again requiring both male and female. Some have tried to conclude that verse 27 indicates man is in God's image but female is not. Nothing could be further from the truth, it merely indicates that man was created first. Such ideas are not in the text.

God intended marriage from the beginning and it is worth noting that it was not good for Adam to be without Eve. Being single is not superior to marriage in God's eyes. Paul points out that being married is not superior to being single also (thus they are equally honorable estates if done correctly). God points out to man in having him look the animals over that none of them will do as his helper and mate (despite modern attempts to revisit this point).

God made Eve from Adam. Paul indicates this put her under him with regard to the fall, thus she could be under the second Adam also (not two separate lines which must be saved separately). A Rabbinic explanation of verses 22-23 says that woman was not taken from man's foot to be stepped on, or his head to rule over him. She was taken from his chest to be equal, from under his arm to be protected, and from near his heart to be loved. I couldn't say it better.

2.2 THE DESTRUCTION OF MARRIAGE

³ The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? ⁴ And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, ⁵ And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? ⁶ Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. ⁷ They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? ⁸ He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. ⁹ And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery. ¹⁰ His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry. ¹¹ But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. ¹² For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.

Matthew 19:3-12(KJV)

Note that this is the same situation as verses 1-12, with only a few differences. The debate the Pharisees sought to embroil Christ in was between Shammai and Hillel over Deuteronomy 24:1. Shammai was more conservative and said "some uncleanness" meant something really defiling like adultery. Hillel was liberal and said almost anything would do, such as burning food or breaking a dish (one rabbi even permitted divorce if a prettier girl came by). Look for a second at the Deuteronomy passage.

¹ When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. ² And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. ³ And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife; ⁴ Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.

Deuteronomy 24:1-4(KJV)

Verses 2-4 disallow a rotating marriage: if you divorce and remarry you cannot go back to your original spouse. Essentially this forces you to really mean it, rather than being casual about divorce and remarriage. This suggests the passage as opposing a free-for-all mentality.

Let us now look at the word in question, ervah (in English phonetics). It means nakedness, shameful exposure, indecency, or improper behavior. I am actually at a loss as to how this word could be understood as anything other

than unfaithfulness/adultery. Notice it does not say the offended spouse must divorce, it says that if the offender finds no favor due to the action or keeps the adultery up. In other words, if you cannot live with the unfaithful party to the adultery then a divorce can be granted.

Adultery is fairly straightforward, but is there any other reason?

¹⁰ And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband:

¹¹ But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife. ¹² But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. ¹³ And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. ¹⁴ For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. ¹⁵ But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace. ¹⁶ For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?

¹⁷ But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches. ¹⁸ Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised. ¹⁹ Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God. ²⁰ Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. ²¹ Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. ²² For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. ²³ Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men. ²⁴ Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.

1 Corinthians 7:10-24(KJV)

The second allowed cause of divorce is very special. When a marriage was between two unbelievers, but one later becomes a believer and the unbelieving spouse does not want to stay married due to the conversion to Christ, then a divorce is allowed.

In all other cases divorce and remarriage is not allowed.

CHAPTER 3

THE PURPOSE OF MARRIAGE

If you know the purpose of something you can approach it correctly, and without such knowledge you really don't understand it at all. Before we dig to deep into roles and finances, we should understand the purpose of marriage. Sadly it was a long time in my life and marriage till I asked what the purpose of marriage was. To be sure we have probably heard of some of the reasons, but they are mixed in with many things that are not the purpose of marriage, and by confusing the reasons of marriage we have ended up with many of the silly errors that threaten the institution in our broader culture. What got me thinking on this was a discussion Jesus had with the Sadducees, where they were trying to use reducto ad absurdum to deny the resurrection, and they made a silly question about marriage.

¹⁸Some Sadducees (who say that there is no resurrection) came to Jesus, and began questioning Him, saying, ¹⁹“Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man’s brother dies and leaves behind a wife and leaves no child, his brother should marry the wife and raise up children to his brother. ²⁰There were seven brothers; and the first took a wife, and died leaving no children. ²¹The second one married her, and died leaving behind no children; and the third likewise; ²²and so all seven left no children. Last of all the woman died also. ²³In the resurrection, when they rise again, which one’s wife will she be? For all seven had married her.” ²⁴Jesus said to them, “Is this not the reason you are mistaken, that you do not understand the Scriptures or the power of God? ²⁵For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. ²⁶But regarding the fact that the dead rise again, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the burning bush, how God spoke to him, saying, ‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? ²⁷He is not the God of the dead, but of the living; you are greatly mistaken.”

Mark 12:18-27

What caught my attention was Jesus’s statement in verse 25 about there will be no marriage in heaven. Why? Isn’t marriage great? Don’t so many happy marriages say they will be together forever? If there is no marriage in Heaven, and Heaven is perfect, then why should I get married now?

3.1 WHY MARRIAGE?

Why did God make marriage in the first place? The Bible gives us several reasons:

1. To show God’s love for His people (Ephesians 5:21-33, Revelation 19:7-9, 21:9-14, Isaiah 54:5, 62:5, Jeremiah 3:14, Hosea 2:19, Mark 12:18-25 II Corinthians 6:14)
2. For spiritual growth (Ephesians 5:25-27, I Corinthians 7:12-16, I Peter 3:1-6)
3. To raise Godly children (Genesis 1:26-31, 18:18-19, Proverbs 1:8, Malachi 2:15, 1 Corinthians 7:12-16, Ephesians 6:4, Deuteronomy 4:9, 6:6-9, 11:18-20)

4. To exercise dominion together (Genesis 1:26-31)
5. For companionship (Genesis 2:18-25, Proverbs 2:17, Malachi 2:14, Deuteronomy 24:5, I Peter 3:7, Ecclesiastes 9:9)
6. For intimacy (1 Corinthians 7:1-9, Hebrews 13:4)

3.2 THE LOVE OF GOD FOR HIS PEOPLE

Probably one of the most famous passages in the Bible is Ephesians 5. Few passages generate such heat and controversy, and usually because the passage is misunderstood. First let's read the passage.

²¹ Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. ²² Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. ²⁴ Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; ²⁶ That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. ²⁸ So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. ²⁹ For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: ³⁰ For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. ³¹ For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. ³² This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. ³³ Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

Ephesians 5:21-33 (KJV)

¹ And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, ² The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, ³ And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. ⁴ Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. ⁵ But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: ⁶ And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. ⁷ But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. ⁸ Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. ⁹ Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. ¹⁰ So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. ¹¹ And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: ¹² And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. ¹³ Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ¹⁴ For many are called, but few are chosen.

Matthew 22:1-14

⁵ And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. ⁶ And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. ⁷ Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. ⁸ And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean

and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. ⁹ And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. ¹⁰ And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

Revelation 19:5-10

¹ And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. ² And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. ⁴ And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. ⁵ And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. ⁶ And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. ⁷ He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. ⁸ But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

⁹ And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. ¹⁰ And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, ¹¹ Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; ¹² And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: ¹³ On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. ¹⁴ And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. ¹⁵ And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. ¹⁶ And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. ¹⁷ And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. ¹⁸ And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. ¹⁹ And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; ²⁰ The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. ²¹ And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. ²² And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. ²³ And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. ²⁴ And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. ²⁵ And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. ²⁶ And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. ²⁷ And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Revelation 21

This was true even in the Old Covenant:

- II Cor 6:14 Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?
- Isa 54:5 For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.
- Isa 62:5 For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.
- Jer 3:14 Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion:
- Ho 2:19 And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies.

3.3 SPIRITUAL GROWTH

¹² To the rest I say (I, not the Lord) that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. ¹³ If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him. ¹⁴ For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. ¹⁵ But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved. God has called you to peace. ¹⁶ For how do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?

I Corinthians 7:12-16

3.4 RAISE GODLY CHILDREN

²⁶ And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. ²⁸ And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

Genesis 1:26-28(KJV)

3.5 EXERCISE DOMINION TOGETHER

In the last section, I quoted Genesis 1:26-28, which also contains the commands to replenish the earth and subdue it. The husband and wife are both given the command to subdue the earth and exercise dominion. They are a team, and at different times one or the other is the right person for the job God has set before them. Each should help the other to achieve this. This does not in any way mitigate male leadership. Neither the Bible nor I are saying that headship is up for grabs. The husband is the head of the wife, but male headship does not mean the wife has no unique tasks that her husband as a servant leader helps her with. The wife also has authority in areas that should not be questioned like a micromanager. Micromanagement is not leadership, it is annoying. The wife is talented and specially set apart by God to for some tasks that God has set for them. She is the player and her husband is her coach, trainer, and cheerleader. Similarly there are times when the husband is the one who takes the field and his wife is his encourager, support, and advisor.

3.6 COMPANIONSHIP

¹⁸ And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. ¹⁹ And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. ²⁰ And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

²¹ And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; ²² And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. ²³ And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. ²⁴ Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. ²⁵ And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Genesis 2:18-25(KJV)

3.7 INTIMACY

¹ Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: ² It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman. ³ But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. ⁴ The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. ⁵ For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. ⁶ Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

⁷ Now as a concession, not a command, I say this. ⁸ I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another.

⁹ To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single, as I am. ¹⁰ But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

¹¹ To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife should not separate from her husband (but if she does, she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife.

I Corinthians 7:1-11

CHAPTER 4

THE CHRIST-LIKE HUSBAND

4.1 EPHESIANS

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; ²⁶ That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. ²⁸ So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. ²⁹ For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: ³⁰ For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. ³¹ For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. ³² This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. ³³ Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

Ephesians 5:25-33 (KJV)

The Greek word behind love is agape. Agape is love founded or based on someone or something other than the recipient that seeks the betterment of the recipient. As husbands we are commanded to love our wives following the example of Christ towards us, and based on His love of us. When Christ stops loving us and deserving our love we can stop loving our wives in a selfless way. That will never happen. Notice it does not depend on the current behavior of our wife. A wife is not permitted to be cruel to her husband but at times we all do bad things to each other. Such bad behavior is not an excuse for failing to show love, as our love is not based on our wife's behavior.

From the end of verse 25 through 27 Paul discusses Christ and the church as a background for understanding the husbands duty. Marriage is a metaphor of Christ and the church (not the other way around) so if we want honor Christ and give a proper example we must behave as Jesus did. Jesus loved us when we don't deserve it. Jesus sought us when an enemy. Jesus sacrificed for us. Jesus nourishes and makes us better. In a real sense you get the wife you make.

- Do you not like nagging? Why does she have to? What is your part in it?
- Is she cold or contentious to you? What did you do that contributed to this?

We are not solely responsible for our wife and her state, but we are also not complete independent. Your actions, inactions, words, expressions, etc. will all change how she sees herself, you, and your relationship. This is also a great opportunity as you can also work to nourish the good instead of just reaping the bad.

Verse 28 transitions to connecting our love for ourselves to our love to our wives. Verse 31 shows the connection of this to marriage in that we are to be one flesh. From the end of verse 29 through 32 teaches us that the idea of one flesh was to instruct us in how we are the body of Christ and the bride of Christ. It also explains how he could atone for us and how God looks at Jesus when He looks at us. In any case, Paul is arguing that we do not actively hate ourselves or seek opportunities to embarrass or hurt ourselves. We care for ourselves and nourish ourselves.

When hurt we seek to heal ourselves. This is how we are to treat our wives. When we show love to our wives, we are loving ourselves for they are flesh of our flesh. The final verse restates the command to love our wives, and even though we are not Christ that is not an excuse for falling short.

4.2 1 TIMOTHY

Does this mean we don't need to provide for our wives?

But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

1 Timothy 5:8

Provide is does not mean only supply goods (though this is certainly part of it as the context bears out), rather it is more than that. The word means to plan for the needs of. Material things thus are an ongoing need, but we are to provide nourishment not just survival. Christ did not only provide for our salvation needs (He certainly did provide for them, but He did so much more). We must do more than provide for food, clothes, and shelter. So what else do we have to plan for?

To plan you must know your wife. What does she need? What will she need? I can give no cookie cutter answer because it is not that simple. Sometimes it is help she needs. At times it will be material providing. She might need you to listen on occasions, and other times she might need you to step in and solve something. She will at times need you to romance her and at others to just talk things over. Each woman is different, and each woman needs different things at different times. You cannot cram for this test, you must get to know her and her needs. You must be sensitive to what is going on. This is a great time to look at 1 Peter.

4.3 1 PETER

Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

1 Peter 3:7(KJV)

Likewise looks back to 1 Peter 3:1, which similarly refers back to 1 Peter 2:13-17. We are doing this to serve Jesus, freely showing our love by being obedient to His commands.

We are to dwell (or live with in marriage relationship - i.e. not withdrawn but active) with our wives in knowledge and understanding. It has several implications:

1. We are to know our Christian duties to our wives.
2. We are to know our wives. Their likes, dislikes, strengths, weaknesses, abilities, needs and partner with them.
3. We are to be understanding.

Weaker vessel does not mean inferior. Vessel was a commonly used metaphorically to describe an assistant. The Greek word for weaker could refer to strength but it also has the connotation of delicate and tender which fits much better here. Basically Peter is saying don't treat your wife roughly like you would a man, but rather treat her like fine china. She is our helper, not our slave. You would not use a fine china gravy boat to change your oil, don't misuse the helper God gave you.

Notice that Peter places women as joint inheritors, that is we don't inherit apart from them also. Simply put we are equal in God's eyes and jointly inherit. The saints of the Old Testament did not inherit the blessing apart from us according to Hebrews 11, in the same way all believers are of one body (Jesus's) and we inherit together. The Christian life is a race but I am not competing against my wife, rather we are almost running a three-legged race together.

Our prayers are literally cut off. Why would God grant our petitions while we are the instruments of oppressing the gracious gift and helper He has given us? In a sense we are cutting off the blessings and helps he gave us in our wife, so why do we think God will give us more? Think of the parable of the coins. Jesus said that the one who used well what he was given would get more. Enjoy the many blessing of living with a godly woman, nourishing and caring for her, and your cup will truly overflow.

4.4 COLOSSIANS

Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.

Colossians 3:19(KJV)

Here again this passage is a clarification of particular responsibilities we have as Christians. The previous paragraph (Colossians 3:12-17) covers the basic requirements.

The big point I want to make here is God is commanding us not to embitter ourselves against our wives. We cannot disparage them, or concentrate on their faults. We are to pursue them in love. We are to build them up towards Christ. You cannot do that while bitterly complaining to yourself and others about her.

4.5 PROVERBS

Proverbs has much to say on marriage, but I want to concentrate on two passages.

Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD.

Proverbs 18:22

You might be thinking that marriage is more work than it is worth. God tells us it is work but the wife He gives you is more than worth it. She is a good gift, and a sign of favor. If we treat the gift bad or think her unworthy, we insult the giver, God.

¹³ A foolish son is the calamity of his father: and the contentions of a wife are a continual dropping. ¹⁴ House and riches are the inheritance of fathers: and a prudent wife is from the LORD.

Proverbs 19:13-14(KJV)

Note that drips drop so the KJV uses dropping every time for the word to drip. In Proverbs, poetic structure is very important. Verse 13 covers the problems and verse 14 the blessings. In 14 the blessings go father to son and God to husband. In 13 the problems go son to father and wife to husband. The first half of the verses shows a relationship and how things can go between two parties. The second half shows how one can receive in marriage from your wife and God. Look a little deeper though, and realize that Proverbs 18:22 told us our wife is from God and is a blessing, how then does she become contentious as we see in verse 13? It is our sin and then sins of our wives. You cannot just blame your wife for the contentions. God gave each of us a good wife, let us nourish her and grow her to a godly woman or we will be twisting her into a contentious wife, who will bring us sorrow. Show her love or suffer.

CHAPTER 5

THE EXCELLENT WIFE

5.1 EPHESIANS FOR THE WIFE

²¹ Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. ²² Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. ²⁴ Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. . . . ³³ Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

Ephesians 5:21-24,33 (KJV)

What usually gets people going is the word submission. Most discussions center on a modern view of the word submission (oppressed and downtrodden) though the original word (Greek) suggests the idea of voluntarily lining up in order as soldiers under a commander to the glory of your king. The word behind submit is *υποτασσω* (pronounce as: hoop-ot-as'-so) - A Greek military term meaning "to arrange [troop divisions] in a military fashion under the command of a leader". In non-military use, it was "a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden". - From Online Bible Greek Lexicon. Note that the same word is used in Luke 2:51.

⁵¹ And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was **subject** unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. ⁵² And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

Luke 2:51-52

Jesus submitted to Mary and Joseph. Jesus is perfect, Mary and Joseph weren't. Jesus held them together by His will. Jesus, God incarnate, lined up (submitted) to fallible creatures for the glory of the father. Submission cannot be derogatory or demeaning as otherwise it would not be applied to Christ. This is important for anyone in authority to realize, you must treat those under you as you would treat Christ if He were under you. Conversely, those under another must act as Jesus did when he was under authority. Understanding the idea of lining up is critical for understanding a Biblical portrait of a wife. Submission is mentioned in several other places such as Colossians, so we know it is not incidental in God's mind.

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.

Colossians 3:18(KJV)

Submission is frequently misunderstood, and even when understood it's context is missed. To see what I mean, you have to look at where the passage really starts. Ephesians 5:1-2 is the summary of Ephesians 4 and is also the introduction to how we as believers should live our lives in different situations. Notice what Ephesians 5:1-2 says is the main goal and concept of the chapter:

5¹ Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; ² And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

Ephesians 5:1-2

We are to follow God, as His children and not children of the world. What does that mean? We are to do all things in love, being conformed into the likeness of Christ who loved us and did what was best for us not what was most enjoyable to Him at the moment. The objective is to do God's will, which is that which is best. We were not saved so we could sin or seek our own

Back to Ephesians 5:21-33, note that submission is based on the salvation of Christ and the relation to the church, with the goal of being a model for how we love Jesus. The Bible makes it clear that the husband is the senior officer (continuing the military example), see for instance verse 23. The wife has authority, power, dignity, and responsibility and is in charge of many areas of the family. Her husband is to be respected as a senior officer, not a puppet master. No military could run if only the most senior officer could make any decision. The senior officer can override decisions in rare but needful situations but usually listens to the advice of his junior officers then decides. In a family, the husband is to listen to his primary advisor, his wife, and then decide what will be best for the family. Many decisions will be handled by the wife without consultation because she knows the plan and has the authority to make them, thus freeing her husband up. He cannot take this as an excuse for laziness, but she must be given the authority of her position. Wise is the husband, who benefits from the efforts of wife granted the full dignity of her high place as his wife. Ephesians reminds us that the husband wife relationship must reflect the relationship of Christ and the church. Jesus gave us the marching orders and message, which was not to be altered, but He gave us freedom in carrying it out. He guides us but does not coerce us. Think for instance of missions, the command is clear but does Jesus say where and when to send missionaries? How much is the right amount to pay a missionary? The church is to decide in keeping with God's word. We are free to serve. This is what the wife is to do. She is free and she uses her freedom to accomplish the goals of her family as set forth by her husband.

The final verse in the Ephesians passage speaks of reverencing her husband. The word is phobos, from which phobia comes, though the idea is different from phobia. Fear in the Greek is more time referenced, phobos is not an instant, or a fear leading up to an event, or even a fear that results. Phobos speaks of an ongoing state of reverential fear, associated with someone you think is great. Royalty is feared in this sense. Famous people also are usually feared. They gain instant respect, and are not insulted or demeaned. This is how a wife should treat her husband. A great test is, would you say, think, or act like that to Christ? Treat your husband as you would treat Christ.

5:2 1 PETER FOR THE WIFE

¹ Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; ² While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. ³ Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; ⁴ But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. ⁵ For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: ⁶ Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

1 Peter 3:1-6(KJV)

Look at verse 1. What is the submission to be like? The text says likewise, to note to you that this is actually part of a much bigger discussion about how all of us are to live our lives in light of what Jesus has done. Sanctification plays a major role in in 1 Peter 2, and this is the backdrop. The start of the submission passage is actually in chapter 2 verse 13.

¹³ Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme;

¹⁴ Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the

praise of them that do well. ¹⁵ For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: ¹⁶ As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. ¹⁷ Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

1 Peter 2:13-17

Notice that we are all told to submit to the ordinances of man for God. Obviously if a law contradicts a command or requirement of God we must obey God, but such problems are rarer than we might like to think. We will discuss this further in a moment, for now notice the emphasis is clearly on pleasing God and gaining an opportunity to witness to those who will be amazed by our good behavior. Verse 16 sums up what it means to submit perfectly, we are free but we may not use that freedom to do evil, rather we use it to serve God in all things. We are then commanded to show honour to all and love to fellow believers.

What follows the introduction of verses 13-17 is a series of particular examples that the apostle knew would be difficult. If you look into verse 18 it starts with submission as a slave, but the discussion would relate to the work environment today. The next topic hit is ours in chapter 3, the submission of wife to husband. Notice in both cases the one submitted to does not have to be a Christian. This is where the question of submitting really gets tough, and where I will resume my discussion of when something goes against God's orders. No one has problems understanding that if a husband commands his wife to kill, rob, or have an affair that she should not do as he says. Submission does not mean you can do evil or that you are a slave. Recall we are free to serve God, not slaves to sin. God would not put any believer in a place where to obey one rule causes us to disobey another. The challenge comes when an unbelieving husband commands a wife not to go to church or a church social. I mention these separately because the answer is different to each. We are commanded to go to church (for instance Hebrews 10:25) but we are not commanded to go to socials as wonderful as they are. God commands church so the wife must go to church regardless of what the husband says.¹

Verses 3-5 cover dress and fashion. Interestingly adorn is the word *cosmos*, which basically means all that is ordered. *Cosmos* comes directly into English as a synonym for the universe, but it also is the root of the word *cosmetics*. *Cosmetics* are also called *make-up*, which connotes order. *Cosmos* is used primarily to speak of how we are put together and ordered on the outside. Note that Peter doesn't say don't wear jewelry or make-up, otherwise you would have to go around naked because he also mentions apparel in the list. What Peter is saying is don't let that be what makes you who you are. We all wear clothes but to some what clothes you wear are essential. Don't let clothes, make-up, or jewelry rule you. Some Christians take this so far as to think that they can't wear nice fashionable clothes or jewelry. Such people are every bit as ruled by fashion as those who have to have the latest labels. Jesus condemned those who made themselves look bad while fasting because they were doing it to get man's approval. The same argument applies to those who wear ugly clothes and plain style so as not to be "worldly". Such pharisaical behavior has no place in a Christian. Dress nice and tasteful so that your clothing isn't what gets noticed one way or the other.

Verse 6 tells women not to be afraid but Paul told them to fear their husbands. What is going on? Well as you might guess it is speaking about something else. Literally it says not to be afraid of any terror. It is connected with Sarah's life and being like her. Sarah had her failings but she was not shaken (as Abraham was) of the outside fears of others harming him. Sarah was bold, and when that boldness was used for good, she was amazing. A godly woman does not need to fear the many things that can disturb her peace at home because she has God as her protector. Problems will come, her husband will make mistakes (all humans fail, this is not saying it is ok, only acknowledging the reality), children will make the wrong choice, and so on, but her faith and happiness are not secured by these things. Her faith is anchored by God and thus she needs not fear the terrors of this world as other women do for her shepherd is with her.

¹Church attendance is not the highest command though. If a husband is very ill and asks his wife to stay home and help him this week and she can go next week, then I strongly feel that she should stay and help him. Jesus refused to allow false piety to overwhelm kindness. James 2 strongly hits this point also.

5.3 TITUS FOR THE WIFE

⁴ That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, ⁵ To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

Titus 2:4-5(KJV)

The list is pretty straightforward. Note that husbands are mentioned before children. Sadly many women claim to love their children more than their husbands. Such a “love” is not good for the children if it can even be called a love. More often than not it is a sinful attempt to do what she wants with her kids and have some affection war with her husband. Such marital fights should never place children in the middle. Moreover children are best served by two parents who love each other and love their children out of the overflow of their love for each other. Children need a mother and a father in a stable happy home. Don’t deprive them of their needs and call it love.

5.4 BIBLICAL PORTRAIT OF A WIFE

Below is the famous Proverbs 31 wife passage. I have heard some complain of late about how women are held to impossible standards by this passage, and the general culture has been exalting what they term ‘bad moms’ who are stressed and so decide to drop the standards they can’t achieve to drink and party. Proverbs 31 is not set out to show an impossible standard, or to beat women over the head with just like the standard of Jesus is not to beat husbands up with. Proverbs 31 is a beautiful example of a powerful, successful and Godly woman who is loved and respected by everyone around her. It is meant to encourage and empower. Read over and notice all she does on her own. She runs a business, buys land, and so on. Her husband is proud of her and trusts her, giving her the freedom and support to achieve great things. Husbands who want a proverbs 31 wife should be a proverbs 31 husband. Note that the woman described is most likely Ruth, and thus her husband is Boaz. We would all do well to imitate them.

- ¹⁰ Who can find a virtuous woman?
for her price is far above rubies.
- ¹¹ The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her,
so that he shall have no need of spoil.
- ¹² She will do him good
and not evil all the days of her life.
- ¹³ She seeketh wool, and flax,
and worketh willingly with her hands.
- ¹⁴ She is like the merchants’ ships;
she bringeth her food from afar.
- ¹⁵ She riseth also while it is yet night,
and giveth meat to her household,
and a portion to her maidens.
- ¹⁶ She considereth a field, and buyeth it:
with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.
- ¹⁷ She girdeth her loins with strength,
and strengtheneth her arms.
- ¹⁸ She perceiveth that her merchandise is good:
her candle goeth not out by night.
- ¹⁹ She layeth her hands to the spindle,
and her hands hold the distaff.
- ²⁰ She stretcheth out her hand to the poor;
yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.
- ²¹ She is not afraid of the snow for her household:

- for all her household are clothed with scarlet.
- ²² She maketh herself coverings of tapestry;
her clothing is silk and purple.
- ²³ Her husband is known in the gates,
when he sitteth among the elders of the land.
- ²⁴ She maketh fine linen, and selleth it;
and delivereth girdles unto the merchant.
- ²⁵ Strength and honour are her clothing;
and she shall rejoice in time to come.
- ²⁶ She openeth her mouth with wisdom;
and in her tongue is the law of kindness.
- ²⁷ She looketh well to the ways of her household,
and eateth not the bread of idleness.
- ²⁸ Her children arise up, and call her blessed;
her husband also, and he praiseth her.
- ²⁹ Many daughters have done virtuously,
but thou excellest them all.
- ³⁰ Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain:
but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.
- ³¹ Give her of the fruit of her hands;
and let her own works praise her in the gates.

Proverbs 31:10-31(KJV)

CHAPTER 6

PORTRAITS OF BIBLICAL MARRIAGES

6.1 BOAZ AND RUTH

The original super couple.

6.2 PRISCILLA AND ACQUILLA

Faithful believers, humble service.

6.3 ABRAHAM AND SARAH

bright spots, handling problems

CHAPTER 7

BIBLICAL ROMANCE

The Bible does not shy away from the topic of sex, but it also does not sensationalize it. Paul discusses sex in 1 Corinthians chapter 7.

¹ Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. ² Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. ³ Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. ⁴ The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. ⁵ Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. ⁶ But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. ⁷ For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. ⁸ I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. ⁹ But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.

1 Corinthians 7:1-9(KJV)

Before we get into the main parts of the passage, it is worth noting that this was a question the Corinthians had asked Paul. In particular we know from history that many men when they became Christians pledged their daughter's to stay single. Many single men also pledged to stay single. God did not command this but it was a cultural action of that period of time. As time passed natural human desire came up and Corinth was the most lewd city of its day so many temptations existed for the single person. What should they do? Paul says if you don't have such temptations and desires and want to stay single to serve God then great, but if not then get married.

Sex is a part of marriage. It is not the only part or even the most important part, but it is still essential and both the husband and wife should not deny each other the affection they are due. Paul is not trying to create euphemisms for sex though when he speaks of rendering benevolence, rather he is pointing out that there is more to intimacy than sex, and neither party should treat sex as a detached act. Many things are needed to have good intimacy. Talk, affection, concern, help, timing, and a million other things go into having times of passionate love. Most women, for instance, will not be able to enjoy sex if the house is a mess and the sink is full of dishes (undoubtedly there are some, but whenever I mention this to husbands the wife has always agreed with a look of relief as if to say finally a guy telling him). Don't think that doing the dishes is some currency for sex, rather I am saying that when something that matters to your wife is not taken care of, it will be hard for her to freely participate in something that matters to her husband. The reverse is true also. No wife should withhold times of intimacy to get her husband to comply with a desire of hers. The real issue here is to give each other love and to realize that this is a big, general command that affects more than just sex (though not less either). Notice that verse 5 speaks of denying such care and attention is defrauding your spouse. Not a nice thing to do. Paul allows for mutual agreements for times of no intimacy for special worship and devotion, but note that such times are limited to brief, pre-agreed periods. Verse 6 underscores that such periods of non-intimacy are not commanded by God, but are allowed by Him. In other words, don't try to use God as an excuse to avoid being intimate with your spouse.

One crucial note on verse 4, which I am sticking in its own paragraph to make it easy to see, is that not having power over your own body does not mean the other partner can force themselves on you. The word for power carries the connotation of full and complete authority, thus it means you don't have full and complete authority over yourself, you must consider your spouse. Far from granting full authority to your spouse it is saying you must consider your spouse's needs. We have seen so many passages that speak of the freedom that each partner in marriage has and that freedom is to be used not for personal benefit but to glorify God and serve each other. Well that is exactly what is going on here. Paul is stating that you can't say, "I know we got married but I have decided I don't ever want to be intimate with you again." We have become one flesh so our partner has a right to intimacy with us (not just physically, but mentally, emotionally, spiritually, etc.). Don't confuse this with some brute forcing himself on his wife, they are extremely different. This is a case where the wife sees the need of her husband to be intimate, and loves and cares for him, so she does not want him to suffer and be tempted. This is also true for the husband, noting the need of the wife to be loved and romanced, and so not wanting her to feel abandoned and unloved he tenderly woos her. It is not easy and hearts are easily hurt, but each must love and care for the other gently, forgiving wrongs and seeking to make amends.

Many people have asked if the emphasis on singleness in the passage shows a preference for staying single, or possibly a bias on Paul's part. Neither is the case. As was seen in the first study, on the beginning and end of marriage, marriage was God's plan for Adam from the start, and by implication for us as well. Paul is countering two things. One is a tendency among believers to think singleness is a curse or abnormality (it is not). The second is a possible misunderstanding of Paul's statement that marriage was advisable to avoid sexual temptation. Paul did not want people thinking they had to get married, or that single people were being promiscuous. Paul wanted people to understand that God gives some the ability to be single, so they may serve Him more than they could if they had the duties of marriage. Paul's life was hard and he would not have been able to take a wife with him the way he lived. He was arrested, beaten, shipwrecked, and a host of other hardships befell him. No husband could put his wife through that. God granted Paul the ability to be single for service in hardships. This was and is to be honoured. It is not commanded. Paul's desire was for people committed to Christ, and he noted many people try to get out of serving God by marriage. Paul expressed his desire that people would be more like himself and serve God when single as a whole-hearted servant. When they could not stay single out of love for a Christian of the opposite sex (I am being very careful to avoid confusion that either homosexuality or marrying a non-believer is allowable), then they should marry that person and serve God in marriage. Such a love would not have allowed that person to serve apart from marriage. Marriage is not a copout, it is a uniting of a man and a woman to serve God together more than they could do apart.

7.1 SONG OF SONGS

An entire book of the Bible is devoted to intimacy and passionate sexual love between a husband and wife. A reading of the text is fairly straightforward. Some words and poetry can be a little confusing¹ but the overall tenor of the passage is clearly that passion in marriage is good. Read the text (the entire book of Song of Songs) below. Advanced warning is that it is racy, and deliberately so, but no less inspired.

- 1 ¹ The song of songs, which is Solomon's.
- 2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth:
for thy love is better than wine.
- 3 Because of the savour of thy good ointments
thy name is as ointment poured forth,
therefore do the virgins love thee.
- 4 Draw me, we will run after thee:

¹For instance the woman calls herself "black" in the text in an embarrassed way. She is saying she is very tan because she had to work in the fields, this is a statement of her work status and harsh treatment not a diminutive comment of a race. It can't refer to race as it is given to distinguish her from her family. She is also called her husband's sister, not a statement of incest, rather a statement of ethnic identity as we see today in many ethnic groups referring to each other as brothers and sisters. This practice is also common in the church to speak of our adoption into the family of God.

- the king hath brought me into his chambers:
 we will be glad and rejoice in thee,
 we will remember thy love more than wine:
 the upright love thee.
- ⁵ I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem,
 as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.
- ⁶ Look not upon me, because I am black,
 because the sun hath looked upon me:
 my mother's children were angry with me;
 they made me the keeper of the vineyards;
 but mine own vineyard have I not kept.
- ⁷ Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest,
 where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon:
 for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?
- ⁸ If thou know not, O thou fairest among women,
 go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock,
 and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents.
- ⁹ I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots.
- ¹⁰ Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels,
 thy neck with chains of gold.
- ¹¹ We will make thee borders of gold with studs of silver.
- ¹² While the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.
- ¹³ A bundle of myrrh is my wellbeloved unto me;
 he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.
- ¹⁴ My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of Engedi.
- ¹⁵ Behold, thou art fair, my love;
 behold, thou art fair;
 thou hast doves' eyes.
- ¹⁶ Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant:
 also our bed is green.
- ¹⁷ The beams of our house are cedar,
 and our rafters of fir.
- 2 ¹ I am the rose of Sharon,
 and the lily of the valleys.
- ² As the lily among thorns,
 so is my love among the daughters.
- ³ As the apple tree among the trees of the wood,
 so is my beloved among the sons.
 I sat down under his shadow with great delight,
 and his fruit was sweet to my taste.
- ⁴ He brought me to the banqueting house,
 and his banner over me was love.
- ⁵ Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples:
 for I am sick of love.
- ⁶ His left hand is under my head,
 and his right hand doth embrace me.
- ⁷ I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem,

by the roes, and by the hinds of the field,
that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please.

- ⁸ The voice of my beloved!
 behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains,
 skipping upon the hills.
- ⁹ My beloved is like a roe or a young hart:
 behold, he standeth behind our wall,
 he looketh forth at the windows,
 shewing himself through the lattice.
- ¹⁰ My beloved spake, and said unto me,
 Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.
- ¹¹ For, lo, the winter is past,
 the rain is over and gone;
- ¹² The flowers appear on the earth;
 the time of the singing of birds is come,
 and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land;
- ¹³ The fig tree putteth forth her green figs,
 and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell.
 Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.
- ¹⁴ O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock,
 in the secret places of the stairs,
 let me see thy countenance,
 let me hear thy voice;
 for sweet is thy voice,
 > and thy countenance is comely.
- ¹⁵ Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines:
 for our vines have tender grapes.
- ¹⁶ My beloved is mine, and I am his:
 he feedeth among the lilies.
- ¹⁷ Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved,
 and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether.
- 3 ¹ By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth:
 I sought him, but I found him not.
- ² I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets,
 and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth:
 I sought him, but I found him not.
- ³ The watchmen that go about the city found me:
 to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?
- ⁴ It was but a little that I passed from them,
 but I found him whom my soul loveth:
 I held him, and would not let him go,
 until I had brought him into my mother's house,
 and into the chamber of her that conceived me.
- ⁵ I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field,
 that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please.
- ⁶ Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke,
 perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?

- 7 Behold his bed, which is Solomon's;
 threescore valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel.
- 8 They all hold swords, being expert in war:
 every man hath his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night.
- 9 King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon.
- 10 He made the pillars thereof of silver,
 the bottom thereof of gold,
 the covering of it of purple,
 the midst thereof being paved with love,
 for the daughters of Jerusalem.
- 11 Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion,
 and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals,
 and in the day of the gladness of his heart.
- 4 1 Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair;
 thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks:
 thy hair is as a flock of goats, that appear from mount Gilead.
- 2 Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which came up from the washing;
 whereof every one bear twins, and none is barren among them.
- 3 Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely:
 thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks.
- 4 Thy neck is like the tower of David builded for an armoury,
 whereon there hang a thousand bucklers,
 all shields of mighty men.
- 5 Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins,
 which feed among the lilies.
- 6 Until the day break, and the shadows flee away,
 I will get me to the mountain of myrrh,
 and to the hill of frankincense.
- 7 Thou art all fair, my love;
 there is no spot in thee.
- 8 Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon:
 look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon,
 from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards.
- 9 Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse;
 thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes,
 with one chain of thy neck.
- 10 How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse!
 how much better is thy love than wine!
 and the smell of thine ointments than all spices!
- 11 Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honeycomb:
 honey and milk are under thy tongue;
 and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon.
- 12 A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse;
 a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.
- 13 Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits;
 camphire, with spikenard,
- 14 Spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense;
 myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices:

- ¹⁵ A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.
- ¹⁶ Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south;
blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.
Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.
- 5 ¹ I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse:
I have gathered my myrrh with my spice;
I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey;
I have drunk my wine with my milk:
eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.
- ² I sleep, but my heart waketh:
it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying,
Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled:
for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.
- ³ I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on?
I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?
- ⁴ My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door,
and my bowels were moved for him.
- ⁵ I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh,
and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock.
- ⁶ I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone:
my soul failed when he spake:
I sought him, but I could not find him;
I called him, but he gave me no answer.
- ⁷ The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me;
the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me.
- ⁸ I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved,
that ye tell him, that I am sick of love.
- ⁹ What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women?
what is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?
- ¹⁰ My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.
- ¹¹ His head is as the most fine gold,
his locks are bushy, and black as a raven.
- ¹² His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters,
washed with milk, and fitly set.
- ¹³ His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers:
his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.
- ¹⁴ His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl:
his belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires.
- ¹⁵ His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold:
his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.
- ¹⁶ His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely.
This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.
- 6 ¹ Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women?
whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with thee.
- ² My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices,
to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies.

- ³ I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine:
he feedeth among the lilies.
- ⁴ Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah,
comely as Jerusalem,
terrible as an army with banners.
- ⁵ Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me:
thy hair is as a flock of goats that appear from Gilead.
- ⁶ Thy teeth are as a flock of sheep which go up from the washing,
whereof every one beareth twins, and there is not one barren among them.
- ⁷ As a piece of a pomegranate are thy temples within thy locks.
- ⁸ There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number.
- ⁹ My dove, my undefiled is but one;
she is the only one of her mother,
she is the choice one of her that bare her.
The daughters saw her, and blessed her;
yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her.
- ¹⁰ Who is she that looketh forth as the morning,
fair as the moon, clear as the sun,
and terrible as an army with banners?
- ¹¹ I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley,
and to see whether the vine flourished, and the pomegranates budded.
- ¹² Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib.
- ¹³ Return, return, O Shulamite;
return, return, that we may look upon thee.
What will ye see in the Shulamite?
As it were the company of two armies.
- 7 ¹ How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O prince's daughter!
the joints of thy thighs are like jewels,
the work of the hands of a cunning workman.
- ² Thy navel is like a round goblet, which wanteth not liquor:
thy belly is like an heap of wheat set about with lilies.
- ³ Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins.
- ⁴ Thy neck is as a tower of ivory;
thine eyes like the fishpools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bathrabbim:
thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon which looketh toward Damascus.
- ⁵ Thine head upon thee is like Carmel,
and the hair of thine head like purple;
the king is held in the galleries.
- ⁶ How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!
- ⁷ This thy stature is like to a palm tree,
and thy breasts to clusters of grapes.
- ⁸ I said, I will go up to the palm tree,
I will take hold of the boughs thereof:
now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine,
and the smell of thy nose like apples;
- ⁹ And the roof of thy mouth like the best wine for my beloved, that goeth down sweetly,
causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak.

- ¹⁰ I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me.
- ¹¹ Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field;
let us lodge in the villages.
- ¹² Let us get up early to the vineyards;
let us see if the vine flourish,
whether the tender grape appear,
and the pomegranates bud forth:
there will I give thee my loves.
- ¹³ The mandrakes give a smell,
and at our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old,
which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.
- 8 ¹ O that thou wert as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother!
when I should find thee without, I would kiss thee;
yea, I should not be despised.
- ² I would lead thee, and bring thee into my mother's house, who would instruct me:
I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate.
- ³ His left hand should be under my head,
and his right hand should embrace me.
- ⁴ I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, until he please.
- ⁵ Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?
I raised thee up under the apple tree:
there thy mother brought thee forth:
there she brought thee forth that bare thee.
- ⁶ Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm:
for love is strong as death;
jealousy is cruel as the grave:
the coals thereof are coals of fire,
which hath a most vehement flame.
- ⁷ Many waters cannot quench love,
neither can the floods drown it:
if a man would give all the substance of his house for love,
it would utterly be contemned.
- ⁸ We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts:
what shall we do for our sister in the day when she shall be spoken for?
- ⁹ If she be a wall, we will build upon her a palace of silver:
and if she be a door, we will inclose her with boards of cedar.
- ¹⁰ I am a wall, and my breasts like towers:
then was I in his eyes as one that found favour.
- ¹¹ Solomon had a vineyard at Baalhamon;
he let out the vineyard unto keepers;
every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver.
- ¹² My vineyard, which is mine, is before me:
thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand,
and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred.
- ¹³ Thou that dwellest in the gardens,
the companions hearken to thy voice:

cause me to hear it.
¹⁴ Make haste, my beloved,
and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices.

Song of Solomon

CHAPTER 8

DECIDING TO MARRY AND FINDING A SPOUSE

I am including this for completion and for single people contemplating marriage and courtship. The texts cover two issues you need to consider before deciding to marry: desire and service.

8.1 DESIRE

¹ Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. ² Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. ³ Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. ⁴ The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. ⁵ Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. ⁶ But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. ⁷ For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. ⁸ I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. ⁹ But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.

1 Corinthians 7:1-9(KJV)

We have already looked at this in some detail. For the topic at hand it is key to notice that strong sexual desires indicate a need to marry but not necessarily which spouse, and should never be taken as the sole reason. It is wrong and insulting to marry someone just to have sex with them. A lack of sexual interest is certainly a reason not to get married though. It is equally insulting to marry someone you find unattractive. You should find your spouse to be desirable.

8.2 SERVICE

¹⁷ But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches. ¹⁸ Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised. ¹⁹ Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God. ²⁰ Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. ²¹ Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. ²² For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. ²³ Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men. ²⁴ Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.

²⁵ Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful. ²⁶ I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be. ²⁷ Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. ²⁸ But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you. ²⁹ But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; ³⁰ And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; ³¹ And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away. ³² But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: ³³ But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. ³⁴ There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. ³⁵ And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction.

³⁶ But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry. ³⁷ Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well. ³⁸ So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better.

³⁹ The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord. ⁴⁰ But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.

1 Corinthians 7:17-40(KJV)

One of the major questions the Corinthians had for Paul (chapter 7 starts addressing their questions) had to do with what to do with those pledged to celibacy. Could they ever become married. Verses 17-24 covers the basic principle of not worrying about your condition or estate, and while not directly addressing marriage, it is helpful in understanding later comments.

Verses 25-39 hit directly on the question of those pledged to celibacy most likely by parents and their release from the vow. Paul says the Lord puts no requirement on them, they can stay celibate or marry as need be. Paul adds some advice for making the decision to marry or not if pledged to celibacy. Note this is not a statement of uninspired opinion, rather it is to distinguish command from advice. Most people today are not in the place of pledged to celibacy (unless you are a roman catholic monk or nun, but then they would not be reading this...), but the discussion is still helpful in seeing the benefits of being single. Note Paul's comment about doing better by not marrying is directly with regard to not breaking a vow of celibacy, not a preference of singleness. The one keeping or not keeping the virgin is the father not a betrothed.

8.3 SELECTING A SPOUSE

The most important characteristic of a spouse is that they share a true faith and love of God through Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul tells the Corinthians:

¹¹ We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians; our heart is wide open. ¹² You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted in your own affections. ¹³ In return (I speak as to children) widen your hearts also.

¹⁴ Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? ¹⁵ What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? ¹⁶ What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said,

“I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them,
and I will be their God,
and they shall be my people.

¹⁷ Therefore go out from their midst,
and be separate from them, says the Lord,
and touch no unclean thing;
then I will welcome you,

¹⁸ and I will be a father to you,
and you shall be sons and daughters to me,
says the Lord Almighty.”

⁷¹ Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.

² Make room in your hearts for us. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have taken advantage of no one. ³ I do not say this to condemn you, for I said before that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together. ⁴ I am acting with great boldness toward you; I have great pride in you; I am filled with comfort. In all our affliction, I am overflowing with joy.

II Corinthians 6:11-7:4 (ESV)

People have argued about what unequally yoked applies. The tense suggests to stop doing something they are currently doing, and unequally yoked comes from agriculture and refers to not yoking different types of animals, say an ox and donkey. Note the main command 6:14-18 is sandwiched before and after with appeals of love, as Paul seeks to get his readers to open their hearts to him, so he is anticipating that they will not like what he is asking. Paul is not commanding no interaction with unbelievers (he directly states this in I Corinthians 5:9-13), but he is saying we are not to be tied to unbelievers in something core to our role. At a minimum would prohibit marrying an unbeliever, but would also include other things like not hiring unbelievers in a church, or allowing unbelievers to teach in Sunday school or Bible study. I view both of these applications as essentially the same, as the church is the bride of Christ, thus to have an unbeliever serving in church is the same as marrying an unbeliever - an abomination to God. It makes the importance of faith to be nothing, and places other things (physical attraction, affluence, intelligence, etc) above Christ in the selection of our spouse.

CHAPTER 9

THE SCOPE OF MARRIAGE

The Biblical marriage is between one man and one woman. Sadly today many seek to change the scope and definition of marriage. In this chapter I deal with some of these questions.

9.1 ΠΟΛΥΓΑΜΥ

The basic question goes, “if marriage is monogamous, why was polygamy so rampant in the Old Testament?” There are even places where rules were set up. This could all be easily discounted by noting that the Bible accurately shows people’s sin, and rules for controlling something does not imply affirming the thing, such as the rules for divorce in the Deuteronomy. Probably the toughest passage is where God tells David that He gave David his many wives.

OT Passages

9.1.1 ΑΒΡΑΗΑΜ, ΣΑΡΑΗ, ΗΑΓΑΡ

Genesis 16 (entire chapter 1-16)

¹ Now Sarai Abram’s wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. ² And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. ³ And Sarai Abram’s wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife.

⁴ And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes. ⁵ And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the LORD judge between me and thee. ⁶ But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face.

⁷ And the angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur. ⁸ And he said, Hagar, Sarai’s maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai. ⁹ And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands.

¹⁰ And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. ¹¹ And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the LORD hath heard thy affliction. ¹² And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man’s hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren. ¹³ And she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me? ¹⁴ Wherefore the well was called Beerlahairoi; behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered.

¹⁵ And Hagar bare Abram a son: and Abram called his son's name, which Hagar bare, Ishmael. ¹⁶ And Abram was fourscore and six years old, when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram.

Genesis 16 (KJV)

Genesis 17

¹⁵ And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. ¹⁶ And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her. ¹⁷ Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear? ¹⁸ And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee! ¹⁹ And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. ²⁰ And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. ²¹ But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year. ²² And he left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.

²³ And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house; and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the selfsame day, as God had said unto him. ²⁴ And Abraham was ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. ²⁵ And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. ²⁶ In the selfsame day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son. ²⁷ And all the men of his house, born in the house, and bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him.

Genesis 17

Note that only Sarah is recognized by God as a wife. Ishmael and Isaac recognized as sons and gain blessing.
Genesis 18

⁹ And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent. ¹⁰ And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him. ¹¹ Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. ¹² Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also? ¹³ And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? ¹⁴ Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son. ¹⁵ Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh.

Genesis 18

Note again only Sarah recognized.

The first reference to polygamy is found in Genesis 4 in the lineage of Cain. Of Lamech, a descendant of Cain, we read:

Then Lamech took for himself two wives: the name of one was Adah, and the name of the second was Zillah. And Adah bore Jabal. He was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. His brother's name was Jubal. He was the father of all those who play the harp and flute. And as for Zillah, she also bore Tubal-Cain, an instructor of every craftsman in bronze and iron. And the sister of Tubal-Cain was Naamah.

Then Lamech said to his wives: Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; Wives of Lamech, listen to my speech! For I have killed a man for wounding me, Even a young man for hurting me. If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, Then Lamech seventy-sevenfold. (Genesis 4:19-25)

9.2 HOMOSEXUALITY

9.3 OPEN MARRIAGES AND AFFAIRS

APPENDIX A

STUDY 1

Many fine books exist on the subject of marriage, and can be very edifying, but in this study we are going to concentrate on what the Bible says about marriage. As such we must follow the basic rules of Biblical interpretation:

1. God's word is our final authority, so everything we think, say, and do must be governed by it. It is not read in light of what we want, we are viewed in light of it. What it says is thus of primary importance.
2. Read a passage in context: Read passages not verses, and even then read them in the context of the chapter, book, and the rest of the Bible. Scriptures to not contradict each other but rather clarify and qualify each other so we can better understand exactly what God means. The goal is to better understand what God wants not to seek our own.
3. Interpretation of a passage depends on the grammatical and literary rules standard for the type of literature being read: in other words read poetry as poetry, parable as parable, history as history, and so on. Poetry for instance uses constructs such as trees clapping hands to speak of the universal greatness and joy at what God does, it does not actually mean they clap or have hands.
4. Historical context can be helpful in understanding the background but must never overrule the clear statements of the text.

The Beginning and End of Marriage

1. Genesis 1:26-28
2. Genesis 2:18-25
3. Matthew 19:3-12
4. Deuteronomy 24:1-4
5. 1 Corinthians 7:10-24

APPENDIX B

STUDY 2

Our main text for tonight will be:

Ephesians 5:21-33

Before we get into the unpopular parts lets look at the purpose of this passage:

Ephesians 5:1-2

Now let's look at how the church is compared to a bride in other passages in scripture.

Matthew 22:1-14

Revelation 19:5-10

Revelation 21

This was true even in the Old Covenant:

Isa 54:5 For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.

Isa 62:5 For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.

Jer 3:14 Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion:

Ho 2:19 And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies.

Now let's look a bit more at Ephesians 5 with this as background.

APPENDIX C

STUDY 3

We are looking at the responsibilities of the husband tonight. There are numerous passages that cover our duties and attitudes. We are going to look at the most direct statements due to the quantities of verses on the subject.

C-0-1 EPHESIANS 5:25-33

What does it mean to love? Why the discussions on our bodies and Christ with the church? What is the mystery? How are we to live in light of it?

C-0-2 1 TIMOTHY 5:8

What does it mean to provide?

C-0-3 1 PETER 3:7

Likewise looks back to 1 Peter 3:1, which similarly refers back to 1 Peter 2:13-17.

What does it mean to dwell? What is a weaker vessel? What is a joint heir? What does it mean for our prayers to be blocked?

C-0-4 COLOSSIANS 3:19

What is the context of the passage? Look at verses 12-17. How do we act bitter towards our wives?

C-0-5 PROVERBS

Here are a few verses from proverbs on wives:

Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing,
and obtaineth favour of the LORD.

Proverbs 18:22

¹³ A foolish son is the calamity of his father:
and the contentions of a wife are a continual

dropping. ¹⁴ House and riches are the inheritance of fathers: and a prudent wife is from the LORD.

Proverbs 19:13-14(KJV)

Note that drips drop so the KJV uses dropping every time for the word to drip.

APPENDIX D

STUDY 4

We are looking at the responsibilities of the wife tonight. The first thought that always comes to mind is submission, by which we think subservience, which is not correct.

D.0.6 EPHESIANS 5:21-24,33

When you hear submit, what do you think? What does our culture think? The word behind submit is *υποτασσω* (pronounce as: hoop-ot-as'-so) - A Greek military term meaning "to arrange [troop divisions] in a military fashion under the command of a leader". In non-military use, it was "a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden". - From Online Bible Greek Lexicon. Note that the same word is used in Luke 2:51. Who is it in reference to? Is the word trying to show superiority in person?

Are women subject to men? Why is a wife to submit to her husband? Is it based on his obedience to God? We will see more of this in 1 Peter. Since it commands submission in all things can a wife not make decisions or be in charge of any area? Can a wife not do things without her husband's ok? Is the church to have no initiative? What are the bounds?

What does it mean to fear/reverence her husband? How does this relate to what is above.

D.0.7 1 PETER 3:1-6

In 1 Peter is the husband to be submitted to a Christian? What if he commands something God forbids (or vice versa)? How about the grey areas? What is the point of verses 3-5? Interestingly adorn is *cosmos*- kind of all that is ordered. What is going on with the end of verse 6?

D.0.8 TITUS 2:4-5

What is commanded? Why?

KEITH EVAN SCHUBERT

D.0.9 PROVERBS 31:10-31

This passage is well known but almost never studied. Who is it addressed to? What is the character of the wife? Does she fit your image from the word "submit"?

APPENDIX E

STUDY 5

I have never heard a single sermon or study in my 30+ years as a Christian that covered this topic, or seriously looked at verses that cover it, despite it being the subject of a whole book of the Bible. I find this strange. Many of the commentators show their biases strongly at this point. We are going to concentrate on:

1 Corinthians 7:1-10

but will bring in some side verses to highlight certain points.

E.1 INTIMACY

- Song of Songs 1:2-6,12-17
- Song of Songs 2:3-7
- Song of Songs 4:1-14

E.2 NOT IGNORING NEEDS

Song of Songs 5:2-8

E.3 REMARRIAGE

1 Timothy 5:11-15

APPENDIX F

SAMPLE MARRIAGE CEREMONY

- Prelude Music and Seating -

1. Seat parents
2. Pastor, groom, and best man enter and stand waiting

Musical Solo

- Procession -

1. flowergirls and ring bearers
2. Maid of Honor
3. Bell Ringer
4. Bride and Father

- Welcome -

As a minister of Christ, I warmly welcome each of you to this service. We are gathered here in God's presence to witness the marriage vows of (groom's name) and (bride's name).

A wedding is a special occasion when a man and woman publicly proclaim their love and declare their commitment to each other by being bound in covenant with God and before men.

For all of us it will mean sharing in a most intimate and love filled moment in the lives of two people we know and appreciate.

For (groom's name) and (bride's name) it is the time of formally committing themselves to one another in a marriage relationship that is to last a lifetime.

For us as a congregation of witnesses, by our presence here, we accept responsibility for supporting Danniell and Ashley in this new relationship into which they are about to enter. We are called to rejoice in their happiness, to

encourage them in their trials, and to pray for them regularly.

(groom's name) and (bride's name) are both pleased and honored that you have responded to their invitation to share these happy and sacred moments with them.

- Prayer of Invocation -

Let us go before the Lord in prayer...

- Giving of the bride -

Pastor Who gives this woman to be married to this man?

father Her mother and I do.

- Musical Solo -

- Scripture -

1 Corinthians 13

- Short Message -

- Intent/Charge (Groom) -

Pastor (Groom's name), the Scriptures instruct you to love and lead your wife, just as Christ loves and leads His church. The apostle Paul writes:

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her ... Husbands ought also to love their own wives as their

own bodies . . . For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church. (Ephesians 5: 25,28-29 NASB)

(Groom's name), will you receive (Bride's name) to be your wife, to live together with her as your companion for life? Will you love her and lead her as God has instructed? Will you give yourself for her and to her? Will you pray for her, and will you forsake all others, being faithful to her until God shall separate you by death?

Danny I will.

- Intent/Charge (Bride) -

Pastor (Bride's name), the Scriptures teach that wives are to honor and respect their husbands, just as the church honors and respects Christ. Again, Paul writes:

Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. (Ephesians 5:22-24 NASB)

(Bride's name), will you receive (Groom's name) to be your husband, to live together as your companion for life? Will you honor, respect, and love him as God has instructed? Will you give yourself for him and to him? Will you pray for him, and will you forsake all others, being faithful to him until God shall separate you by death?

Bride I will.

- Affirmation (Congregation) -

Pastor As the family and friends, who are witnesses to the wedding of (Groom's name) and (Bride's name), each of us here is promising to support and encourage them toward each other that their marriage should be built up and remain strong. Signify your intent to both (Groom's name) and (Bride's name) to support their marriage by saying we will.

Congregation We will.

- Vows (Groom) -

Pastor Please face each other and hold hands. (Bride hands bouquet to Maid of Honor) As a sign of your commitment, (Groom's name), please repeat these vows after me.

Pastor/Groom In the presence of God, and before our witnesses and friends, I, (Groom's name), with joy and in love, take you to be my wife, to be the mother of my children, and the companion of my days. I promise to fully share my life with you, through days of happiness or sadness, abundance or want. I pledge to you my unfailing love always.

- Vows (Bride) -

Pastor As a sign of your commitment, (Bride's name), please repeat these vows after me.

Pastor/Bride In the presence of God, and before our witnesses and friends, I, (Bride's name), with joy and in love, take you to be my husband, to be the father of my children, and the companion of my days. I promise to fully share my life with you, through days of happiness or sadness, abundance or want. I pledge to you my unfailing love always.

- Presentation of Rings (Groom) -

Pastor (to Groom) What token do you give as a symbol of your faithfulness?

Groom A ring. (takes ring from best man)

Pastor Repeat after me as you place the ring on (Bride's name)'s finger:

Pastor/Groom With this ring, I thee wed.

- Presentation of Rings (Bride) -

Pastor (to Bride) What token do you give as a symbol of your faithfulness?

Bride A ring. (takes ring from Maid of Honor)

Pastor Repeat after me as you place the ring on (Groom's name)'s finger:

Pastor/Bride With this ring, I thee wed.

- Pronouncement of Marriage -

BIBLICAL MARRIAGE

SAMPLE MARRIAGE CEREMONY

Those whom God hath joined together, let no one put asunder. For as much as (Groom's name) and (Bride's name) have consented together in holy wedlock, and have witnessed the same before God and this company, and thereto have given and pledged their troth either to other, and have declared the same by giving and receiving of a ring, and by joining of hands; I pronounce that they be husband and wife together, in the name of the Father, and of the son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen

You may now kiss the bride.

- Prayer of Blessing -

Let us go before the Lord in prayer...

- Introduction of the Couple-

It is my great pleasure to be the first to introduce (married couple).

- Benediction -

Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: That ye may with one mind [and] one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ro 15:5-6 AV

- Recessional -

1. Bride and Groom
2. Flower Girls
3. Best Man and Maid of Honor
4. Attendants
5. Bride's Parents
6. Groom's Parents
7. Pastor
8. Rows, Front to back (dismissed by ushers)

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE MARRIAGE CEREMONY - SPANISH

- Prelude Music and Seating -

1. Seat parents
2. Pastor, groom, and best man enter and stand waiting

Musical Solo

- Procession -

1. flowergirls and ring bearers
2. Maid of Honor
3. Bell Ringer
4. Bride and Father

- Welcome -

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Ashley in this new relationship into which they are about to enter. We are called to rejoice in their happiness, to encourage them in their trials, and to pray for them regularly.

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Pastor Who gives this woman to be married to this man?

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- Scripture -

1 Corinthians 13

- Short Message -

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Pastor (Groom’s name), the Scriptures instruct you to love and lead your wife, just as Christ loves and leads His church. The apostle Paul writes:

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her . . . Husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies . . . For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church. (Ephesians 5: 25,28-29 NASB)

(Groom’s name), will you receive (Bride’s name) to be your wife, to live together with her as your companion for life? Will you love her and lead her as God has instructed? Will you give yourself for her and to her? Will you pray for her, and will you forsake all others, being faithful to her until God shall separate you by death?

Groom I will.

- Intent/Charge (Novia) -

Pastor (Nombre de novia), las Escrituras nos enseñan que las esposas deben honrar y respetar a su esposo, como la iglesia honra y respeta a Cristo. Otra vez, Pablo escribe:

Las casadas estén sujetas a sus propios maridos, como al Señor; porque el marido es cabeza de la mujer, así como Cristo es cabeza de la iglesia, la cual es su cuerpo, y él es su Salvador. Así que, como la iglesia esta sujeta a Cristo, así también las casadas lo estén a sus maridos en todo. (Efesios 5:22-24)

¿(Nombre de novia), tomas a (nombre de novio) para ser tu esposo, para vivir juntos como tu compañero por vida? ¿Lo vas a honrar, respetar, y amar como Dios a instruido? ¿Te darías tu misma por él y para él? ¿Oraras por él, y abandonarás a los demás, siéndole fiel a el hasta que Dios los separe por muerte?

Bride I will.

- Affirmation (Congregation) -

Pastor As the family and friends, who are witnesses to the wedding of (Groom’s name) and (Bride’s name), each of us here is promising to support and encourage them toward each other that their marriage should be built up and remain strong. Signify your intent to both (Groom’s name) and (Bride’s name) to support their marriage by saying we will.

Congregation We will.

- Vows (Groom) -

Pastor Como símbolo de nuestro Compromiso, (nombre de novio), por favor repite estas vows conmigo.

Pastor/Novio En la presencia de Dios, y ante nuestros testigos y amigos, Yo, (nombre de novio), con alegría y en amor, te tomo a ser mi esposa, para que seas el madre de mis hijos, y mi compañera de mis días. Yo prometo compartir toda mi vida contigo, en los días de felicidad o tristeza, en abundancia y querer. Yo te doy mi eterno amor para siempre.

- Vows (Novia) -

Pastor Como símbolo de nuestro Compromiso, (nombre de novia), por favor repite estas vows conmigo.

Pastor/Novia En la presencia de Dios, y ante nuestros testigos y amigos, Yo, (nombre de novia), con alegría y en amor, te tomo a ser mi esposo, para que seas el padre de mis hijos, y mi compañero de mis días. Yo prometo compartir toda mi vida contigo, en los días de felicidad o tristeza, en abundancia y querer. Yo te doy mi eterno amor para siempre.

- Presentation of Rings (Groom) -

Pastor (a la Novio) ¿Qué símbolo darás cómo señal de tu fidelidad?

Novio Un anillo. (takes ring from Best Man)

Pastor Repite después de mí mientras le pone el anillo a (nombre de novia)

Pastor/Novio Con este anillo, Yo me caso

- Presentación de Anillos (Novia) -

Pastor (a la Novia) ¿Qué símbolo darás cómo señal de tu fidelidad?

Novia Un anillo. (takes ring from Maid of Honor)

Pastor Repite después de mí mientras le pone el anillo a (nombre de novio)

Pastor/Novia Con este anillo, Yo me caso

- Pronouncement of Marriage -

Those whom God hath joined together, let no one put asunder. For as much as (Groom's name) and (Bride's name) have consented together in holy wedlock, and have witnessed the same before God and this company, and thereto have given and pledged their troth either to other, and have declared the same by giving and receiving of a ring, and by joining of hands; I pronounce that they be husband and wife together, in the name of the Father, and of the son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen

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