

One Flesh Union • Genesis 2:18-25

Ryan Perz • October 1, 2023

There are scores of marriage quotes:

Ruth Bell Graham: “A happy marriage is the union of two good forgivers”

That seems very accurate in my experience.

Socrates: “By all means, marry. If you get a good wife, you will be happy. If you get a bad one, you will be a philosopher.”

- What I find interesting is that both mention happiness—thousands of years apart; different culture, still the desire to be happy.

I think that is because the first marriage was a happy one—every couple that enters into marriage have hopes of going back to Eden.

(v25) —nothing unpleasant; nothing to be ashamed about.

- We have a couple of things working against happy marriage.

1. The Fall

2. A culture that does not respect marriage

Just think of how much TV and music promotes recreational sex and adultery,

3. We have an enemy who seeks to attack marriage

Not just the idea of marriage...but break of actual marriages.

Ephesians 4:26–27 ESV

Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil.

How many couples go to bed in anger. The Bible reminds us that has little to do with compatibility, and more to do with a real, active Enemy who loves to see marriages fail and fall.

But we do have a picture of the first happy marriage, that gives a foundation to build on.

Marriage comes from God as one plan resting on 3 pillars.

ONE PLAN

- First, marriage comes from God:
He instituted it and has authority over it.

Matthew 19:4–5 ESV

He answered, “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’?”

- God created and spoke the authoritative word over marriage.
This is also important because marriage belongs to God, not the state.
The government may issue marriage licenses—but marriage belongs to God.
- Marriage is God’s plan.
—The LORD God’s initiative
—Adam’s Response

The Lord’s initiative:

- This text has several verbs that indicate God’s initiative: the LORD God said...formed, caused, made.
- Yet the starting point: what’s lacking (v18)
- The woman that God will create is called something specific: A Helper

When we use that word, we can mean something like this: “a person who can’t do the big job, so they are the helper.”

That's not at all what this word means. In fact, when it's used other places in the OT....it's used to describe God's strong help.

Deuteronomy 33:7 (ESV)

"Hear, O LORD,
and be a help against his adversaries."

- The LORD helping Judah.

Psalm 46:1 ESV

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.

...or of strong military support (Ezek. 12:14)

I say this because some view the wife's role as if she is a second-class citizen.

- › *I believe the Bible teaches that men are called to be strong leaders in the home and church,*
- › *and the same Bible reminds us men that we need the strong support of our helper.*

- Light is shed on what this help looks like - (18b) "fit for"; Lit: "according to opposite" (counterpart)
- It shows that Eve was made as an equal image-bearer

Yet they are distinct and have distinct roles:

1 Peter 3:7 ESV

Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

Equal image-bearing heir.

- This is where we get the term complementarian. Men and women are equal in bearing God’s image but have different roles in home and church.

1 Timothy 2:12–13 ESV

I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve;

One Plan: God put man and woman together with the single plan that they would form a team serving him.

- Vss 19-20

This section does a couple of things:

- First, we get a view of Adam exercising royal rule
- Also, V19-20 builds up some delay and suspense in the story of creating Eve...

We can imagine: God brings a giraffe (too tall)...still feeling alone...next a Rhino—(to much girth....still alone.....pelican (can’t fly)....still alone...

- God’s action in v21-22 - again, just like with the creation of man, we have close, tactical involvement (surgery).

Matthew Henry’s excellent take:

“Not made out of his head to top him, not out of his feet to be trampled by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and hear his heart to be beloved.”

- This very much reflects the picture of a Wedding: God the Father leading the bride to the groom.

Adam’s Response:

He receives the good gift from his Father and then Adam writes the first love poem ever. (v23)

- V24-25

Leaving and cleaving means that the marriage becomes the primary obligation.

“Hold fast”; one OT commentator states, “This phrase means passion and permanence.”

The One Plan: One man, one woman become one flesh.

One unified front with the purpose of serving God.

One final point:

Derek Kidner- “Adam will not live well until he loves, giving himself away.”

In other words, for Adam to truly image God, he would need to be in a relationship where he shares his love with another.

3 PILLARS

- From this text we see 3 main pillars. All 3 are vital to keep the foundation stable and secure.

Pillar 1: One Man, One Woman

- It’s clear that the Lord made two opposite sexes.

—This means that any same-sex relationship, multiple partners, even divorce on unbiblical grounds...is an attempt to push down the pillar.

- The attack on this Pillar is nothing new. We see through Genesis a lack of respect for keeping sexuality pure.

—Gen. 19 Sodom and Gomorrah

—Gen. 39 a married woman tries to seduce Joseph

Pillar 2: One Flesh Covenant

Marriage is covenantal by nature.

Malachi 2:14 ESV

But you say, “Why does he not?” Because the LORD was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant.

- Things like adultery and divorce have always struck at this Pillar.
(Genesis has some examples of marriage done bad—and attacks this.)

There is a trend of attack on the Covenant of Marriage= cohabitation.

That's been a pretty standard way of living for non-Christians.

- I can see that among non-believers, but what is surprising is to find it among professing Christians (who tell me they believe Jesus and follow him)...who think its ok to live and share life with a person of the opposite sex who they are not in covenant with.
- Personally, I have had to deal with this several times in recent years.

I'm usually asked: What's wrong?

TGC Article: 4 Reasons

1) Places you in the path of unnecessary temptation

1 Corinthians 6:18 (ESV)

Flee from sexual immorality.

I appreciate the honesty of this author:

"I wouldn't have trusted my ability to resist the temptation of premarital sex while cohabitating."

2) Endangers your future relationship

(Statistically around 1/3 cohabitating relationships end in divorce.)

3) Hinders your opportunity to witness

When I was engaged to my wife, I had a non-Christian coworker think I was an idiot for not living with my fiancé. He would say, "aren't you going to test drive the car before you drive it?"

Even though I had to endure some of the teasing, he knew I was a Christian.

› **Part of Christian witness is just living differently.*

4. Dishonors marriage (Heb. 13:4)

Hebrews 13:4 ESV

Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.

—Cohabiting says: I want to enjoy all the benefits of marriage, without the covenant.

Pillar 3: Union with Christ

- Earthly marriage is foundational; family is vital to bring structure to society.

Yet earthly marriage is not ultimate.

Eph. 5 pulls this into perspective.

Ephesians 5:22–23 ESV

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.

Here we see vital things for the foundation: Headship (Adam was created first, has a leadership role), submission, loving service. Those are ingredients for a good Gospel-centered marriage.

Ephesians 5:25 ESV

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

This just keeps building up into a Christ-centered marriage.

Ephesians 5:31–32 ESV

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

Maybe you have been a little put off that I’ve said a few times that the Bible should not be read like a love letter; maybe you think that’s too unromantic.

The Bible is also written with a wedding at the very beginning and end.

One earthly, the other heavenly.

Revelation 21:2 ESV

And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Good pastors do not “do weddings” —Good pastors prepare people to be married.

Any goober can be ordained online and can lead you in saying vows and saying a prayer.

- › What’s most important is the bride being prepared for her groom, and he to receive her into his life.

And that plays out into what God is doing with this world, throughout the Bible, and in your life.

What’s ultimate is being prepared as a bride for Christ.

Conclusion:

—Thank. If you are in a Christian marriage, it’s a gift. Thank God. If your parents are both Christian.

—Take care. Guard our thoughts, attitudes, actions. So much of media and entertainment mocks and does not honor marriage.

And then there is our own sinful self-centeredness.

Some parents even start praying for godly spouses for their children—even while they are children: taking care of the next generation.

—Treasure. Earthly marriage is only a shadow of what we are aiming for.

Earthly marriage can’t make us happy eternally. Only Christ can.