

The Origin, Purpose, and Plan of Marriage (Genesis 2:18-25)

Origin:

- 1) **Marriage was instituted or ordained by God at the beginning of human history (Gen.2:22).**

Implication: It was not man's idea but God's. God, Himself, performed the first marriage ceremony in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:22). Man, therefore, has **no right** to set it aside or make rules/regulations concerning marriage.

- 2) **Marriage is a foundational institution.**

Implication: The institution of marriage was created by God even before government or the church. It is the building block on which society and the church rests. An attack on marriage is an attack on God, society, and the church.

Purpose:

The primary purpose of marriage is not....

- 1) **Propagate the human race.** Although Genesis 1:28 states that it is the duty to "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth" it is not the fundamental purpose of marriage. The race could be populated simply by mating.
- 2) **Legalized sexual relations.** Marriage is not to be equated with sexual relations. It is more than a sexual union. Marriage is consummated when vows are taken, not on the honeymoon. Marriage authorizes sexual relations. Hebrews 13: 5 states that the "marriage bed is holy and undefiled."
- 3) A matter of human convenience. Secular humanists assert that marriage was originally instituted by man as a matter of convenience (i.e. financial, social, sexual, familial, etc.)

The primary purpose of marriage is companionship: It is God's solution for man's loneliness.

(Gen. 2:18 "And the Lord God said, 'It is not good for man to be alone. I will make him a helper suitable to him.'")

Even though Adam had daily fellowship with God in the Garden he was still **lonely**.

God declared that the single life is **not good**. Although He has called some to be the exception to the rule for the sake of the kingdom (i.e. gift of celibacy—I Cor. 7:26), Genesis 2:18 applies to most people.

God undertook an orientation program to show Adam his need (Gen. 2:19-20). He paraded all of the animals of the field and the birds of the air before him so that he could name them. Sadly, Scripture records "but for Adam there was not found a *helper comparable* him." As a result God "**made** (lit. built) **a helper comparable to him**" (vs. 18). Eve was God's love gift or provision for Adam's specific need.

Definitions:

- 1) **Comparable**—totally suitable; spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, and physically. The Creator provided the perfect match or complement for Adam in order to take away his loneliness.
- 2) **Helper**—to aid or support another person as a friend or ally. It does not mean a subordinate or a glorified servant. The Hebrew word for "**help**" is used of God Himself in Psalms 46:1 "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

Companionship

- Proverbs 2:16-17 “**the immoral woman...forsakes the companion of her youth and forgets the covenant she made before the Lord.**”
- Malachi 2:14 “**the Lord has been witness between you and the wife of your youth with which you have dealt treacherously; yet she is your companion and your wife by covenant.**”

Definitions:

- 1) **Companionship**—“A close, intimate relationship with another in which thoughts, feelings, goals, plans, efforts (and in the case of marriage, bodies) are shared together.”
- 2) **Covenant (marriage)**—“An agreement or promise made by one party to another, on the basis of unconditional love, which the other party may accept or reject but may not alter.”

Notice: Contract: an agreement by one party with another involving demands, expectations, negotiating, and bargaining. (Implies a 50/50 proposition).

- **MARRIAGE IS A COVENANT OF COMPANIONSHIP** (i.e. a mutual commitment to permanently live together and take away one another’s loneliness.)

God’s Purpose Demands God’s Plan

His Plan is not...

A 50/50 performance-based relationship where...

- 1) Acceptance is based on performance (i.e., “You do your part, I’ll do mine”)
- 2) Giving is based on merit (“I’ll show you affection when it is deserved.”)
- 3) Motivation for action is based on how one feels. (“If I feel like it I will”)

God’s Plan is Oneness (Gen. 2:24-25)

Oneness is developed as we realize our responsibilities before God.

- 1) **The Principle of Severance** (“leave”) First responsibility is to establish independence from parents.

Man is said to ‘leave’ but this does not exclude his wife. He is specifically mentioned because he is the designated head of the family unit. A couple may ask and receive their parent’s advice but not their commands. As difficult as it may be, a husband and wife must let go of their parents. Blood may be thicker than water but it should not be thicker than a vow.

The parent-child relationship is temporary, but the husband-wife relationship is permanent. The parent-child relationship is one of dependence (eventually to be broken), but the husband-wife relationship is interdependent.

Leaving is necessary for oneness but it is to be done in the context of **honor** (i.e. “Honor your father and mother...”)

- 2) **The Principle of Permanence** (‘cleave’) Second responsibility is to establish a lifetime commitment to one another.

Cleave does not mean to 'split' or 'divide' (i.e. meat cleaver). The Hebrew word ('dabaq') means to cling, adhere, stick, joined together, hold fast.

Marriage is a legal commitment/covenant before God and man that should be honored for life. "What God has joined together, let no man separate..." (Matt. 19:5-6)

3) **The principle of Unity** ("become one flesh") Third responsibility is to establish oneness with one another. Two must become one. A couple must be monogamous in order for oneness to take place. Scripture is explicitly clear about the miserable long-term effects of polygamy and the deadly results of adultery (Prov. 6:32 "The one who commits adultery with a woman is lacking sense; he who would destroy himself does it.")

The sexual union of a couple is the expression of oneness but it transcends the physical—it also includes the spirit and the soul.

Unit is an ongoing process that occurs over time.

4) **The Principle of Intimacy** ("naked but not ashamed") Fourth responsibility is to establish transparency with one another

Physical nakedness is a picture of emotional and psychological transparency. There are no walls, no hiding, and no secrets but open honesty in every area of the marital relationship. In order to be totally exposed and unashamed one must feel totally accepted.

His and Her Questions:

- 1) What were the qualities that attracted you the most to your mate when you first met?
- 2) Do you accept your mate as God's personal gift/provision to you to take away your loneliness?
- 3) Do you accept your mate as they really are? What have you not accepted about your mate? (Be honest!)
- 4) If there has been any rejection of, withdrawal from, or bitterness toward your mate, it must be confessed to him/her and to God.
- 5) Are you and your mate "one" or are you isolated from one another? Of the four responsibilities listed above, which one(s) have been neglected?