**TITLE: MARRIAGE by DESIGN:**

 **(**God’s Creation**)**

**Introduction:**

* **Purpose**: To bring up the conversation of marriage to help the new generation understand the covenant of marriage.
* **Readers will gain**: a picture of marriage as a life-long covenant, and not a contract subject to termination.

**INTRODUCTION**

It is important to understand that man did not invent marriage; it is God’s institution. The only model we should be following is God’s model, since it is his design. Many people have been introduced to marriage from a worldview rather than a biblical view.

The worldview does not present marriage as sacred and godly. This view mimics the western world which varies from culture to culture, dating back to Ancient Greece and Rome where it was more a legal contract between a man and a woman rather than a covenant. In modern day society marriage is usually copied, rather right or wrong based on what has been modeled.

The best way to understand marriage as a necessary institution is to consider its meaning in the “Law of first mention” where marriage was established in Genesis in the order of creation.

God is a God of order. In the first chapter of the Bible, he introduced his creation. in the beginning he created the Heavens and the Earth in Genesis 1:1-19(the first 4 days of creation). He then created the animals and living creatures of the water and sky in Genesis 1:20-23(the 5th day). The Sixth day he made living creatures of land and the human (Gen 1:24-27).

Secondly, we need to understand that marriage was and still is intended to be a covenant between one man and one woman (Matthew 19:4-6).

After God created the first man, Adam (1:27), He took a rib from Adam and create a woman as his helpmeet (his partner), creating the first husband and wife as bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh calling them “One Flesh” (1:23-24).

Marriage, God’s way is the first step to creating a family according to God’s plan. According to Hebrews 13:4, marriage cannot be redefined to fit the modern-day family dynamic and the social structures that surrounds them.

It appears that marriage has been kicked aside by the generations coming for lack of a true understanding of creating the family through God’s model of marriage. From generation to generation the reasoning for not wanting to marry changes. In some generations, many were not reared in two-parent homes where they saw marriage modeled in any way. Possibly in other situations, reared in two-parent homes where kosher marriage relationships were not displayed and depicted a negative picture. Thus, lacking a clear understanding of what marriage should look like, they settled on the world’s way of creating a family unit. Their consideration of creating family subtracts marriage from their dynamic of partner relationships, having children, or establishing a home together.

Exploring marriage from all sides, while concentrating on its intended purpose by God, will help us see why we really need to get back to the covenant marriage dynamic.

**Chapter One**

The Law of First Mention

***Marriage in the order of Creation***

According to Genesis 2, Marriage came from the mind of God in this order of creation. God created marriage as a covenant between a man and a woman. Therefore, man cannot model marriage without God’s instructions. Marriage consists of three strands; the man, the woman, and God. A marriage having only two strands, the man and the woman, excluding God usually struggles to survive. Think about it, a braid usually takes three strands to create a neatly woven cord. A braid consisting of three married strands creates a neat, strong, and not easily broken cord (Eccl 4:12). This is God’s description of marriage, God being the center strand to create a tightly woven cord. The book of Ecclesiastes in the Bible is referred to as the “Teacher or Preacher.”

In Chapter 12, the “Teacher” discusses how there is strength in numbers. One strand cannot be twisted or braided, two strands twisted together may have the appearance of a cord, but not bound very tightly, over time appearing a little raggedy, causing it to easily come undone as it is handled. The twisted strands are more temporary than permanent. But that three strands become a cord neatly twisted and bind together could last forever if knotted on the end.

***One man; one Woman***

 Since God created marriage to be a covenant between one man, and one woman, the man and the woman must stand before God in the presence of men and make a promise not just to each other but to God. God declares this promise a union making the man and woman one instead of two. They have become bonded, and joined together by God. In Matthew 19:6 he charges them to acknowledge that what he has joined together cannot be separated. Not even by them. Webster’s dictionary says, “a promise is a legally binding declaration that gives the person to whom it is made, a right to expect or claim the performance or forbearance of a specific act.” There is that word again, “binding.” This promise is binding. The expectation is that the man and woman will remain glued together until death separates them. Again, man must follow God’s plan, his model, and his instructions.

***The first man***

God created the man first for a reason. The first man, Adam was created in God’s image (Gen 1:27). Adam became the model for an earthly man. In the image of God, a man can think for himself, express emotions, and he has a will. He was created to obey God with his whole being, his soul, his spirit, and his body and have fellowship with Him. God made man on the sixth day along with other living things, but he made man to have dominion over the earth and all creatures, but he is subjected to God as the creator of all things, making man finite as God is infinite (Gen 1:26-28).

In putting Adam in charge of all things God had made in the prior five days, this included giving him free rein over selecting a mate for himself. Upon looking around at his many choices Adam did not see any living thing suitable for himself. God being a loving God concerned about everything that concerns us decided He would make Adam a suitable mate. God then performed the first surgical procedure and caused Adam to fall asleep (I guess we can call this the first act of anesthesia), he took a rib from Adam’s side and made the woman, and brought her to him. When he brought Adam back to himself, he accepted the woman and named her Eve and she became his wife and marriage became God’s design (Gen. 2:21-24).

***The first woman***

As described in Genesis chapter two and three, Eve became Adam’s wife, and the female model of an earthly woman. Eve was created to line up under Adam, her husband who had dominion over everything and now her. Eve was positioned in the Garden with Adam, their first residence to get to know each other and be fruitful and multiply to fill the earth (Gen.1:28).

God thinking of Adam and his family’s needs, he thought of everything. He prepared the earth to receive everything Adam would need to form and care for the first family. He gave Adam a Home, the garden, he gave him a career, to work the garden so he could feed his family, he gave him position and respect giving him dominion over all the animals, and most importantly he gave him a helpmate to procreate the earth. Basically, God fulfilled for Adam, him finding his “God Thing.” One of the many most quoted verses in the Bible when it comes to marriage, Proverb 18:22 that says, “He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord.” The great thing to notice here is that God did it for Adam as a model for man. Since Adam had a relationship with God, a man’s first step towards modeling a marriage designed by God would be to ask God to give him a rib like he gave Adam a rib. Marriage designed by God must first start with God’s instruction to the man.

**Chapter two**

Exploring the Marriage Model

***God’s marriage Design***

God’s design of marriage is clear in Genesis 2. God’s creation of marriage in Genesis displays a model of the bride being given to her proposed husband by her father. God the Father, brought Eve to Adam to be his wife (Genesis 2:22). Eve representing the church is God’s model of marriage, which we see in Ephesians 5:22-23. In this New Testament passage, Paul shows us a mirror image of Adam and Eve in a husband-and-wife relationship imaging Christ as the husband, and the church as the bride.

 Their relationship should model Christ’s relationship to the church as noted in Ephesians 5:22-33. In these 12 verses, Paul writes, God’s specific instructions for the husband and the wife. God tells the wife that her husband is the head of her because Christ is the head of the church (v. 23). He tells the Husband to love his wife like Christ loves the church because Christ sacrificed himself for the church (v. 25).

 Why did God believe these specific instructs to both the husband and the wife were necessary? First, a woman loves naturally, but has an issue when it comes to submitting to a man. Once she develops a relationship with Christ and submits to Christ, she usually finds it easier to submit to her husband. Second, the husband needs to follow the model of Christ’s love for the Christ, so much so that he models his love for his wife the same way. He then would sacrifice his needs and wants for his wife’s needs and wants.

*A biblical example:*

“If the husband makes Christ’s love for the church the pattern for loving his wife, then he will love her *sacrificially* (Eph. 5:25). Christ gave Himself for the church; so, the husband, in love, gives himself for his wife. **Jacob so loved Rachel that he sacrificially worked fourteen years to win her**. True Christian love “seeketh not her own” (1 Cor. 13:5)—it is not selfish. If a husband is submitted to Christ and filled with the Spirit, his sacrificial love will willingly pay a price that she might be able to serve Christ in the home and glorify Him.[[1]](#footnote-1)”

***Contract vs Covenant***

 God did not design marriage, to be a contract, but a covenant between a man, and a woman in His presence. In today’s modern society, particularly the United States and Europe, the idea of a covenant in marriage has been lost. In ancient times, it was a disgrace to break a covenant. A Christian, a follower of Jesus Christ lives his life by God’s covenant, the Bible, which includes recognizing the meaning of covenant in the Bible.

The Bible describes covenant where marriage is concerned as a binding agreement between a man, woman and God sealed with an oath. In this oath, the two vow to work together to reach a common goal. They agree to remain in step with each other for life. Because the two are joined together as one flesh, breaking the seal of the covenant is painful. It not only hurts the two originally united together but, God and the family created from that union.

 A contract is recognizing a vow and making “just in case” plans to break the vow. Usually, the persons involved in the contact settle on what happens if one or both breaks the vow. The vow usually includes an “if, then” penalty clause. A biblical marriage cannot be a contract because a Christians word should be yes or no. God intended for marriage to last a lifetime. A couple that enters a marriage with an “if it does not work” plan goes against God’s design for marriage. Establishing a sound relationship with Christ before considering marriage is the best way to enter a husband-and-wife covenant relationship.

**Sacred and Godly (Matthew 19:4-6)**

 **Chapter Three**

Modern Day Social Structure and dynamics

***No modern-day exceptions***

~~Unlike us, God Is unchanging. His design for marriage has not changed along with the times. In these days, times are changing faster than ever before. The bad thing to that is the moral way of doing things have changed our moral identity to match the world’s way. God intended for us to follow him from the day we were reborn in him. The rebirth in Christ is simply dying to self and coming alive in Christ. The problem comes when we realize we need to give up our way of doing things to follow the ways of Christ. Because the world is moving in a different direction, does not mean we are excused to follow it. God does not want us to compromise our new life in Christ for any reason. We are expected to live in the modern world but not by the modern world ways. I have heard many excuses, “God understands,” “He knows my heart”, “that way in the old days”.~~

***Accept the whole Bible***

**Choose one of two ways**

**Chapter Four:**

Make A Decision

**First things First: Repent!**

**The Salvation gift**

**Surrender it ALL**

**Chapter Five:**

Ask God for His Instructions

**Why Marriage?**

**Follow His Instruction**

**Wait the right way**

 **Chapter Six**

The Covenant Promise

**The Marriage Vow**

Nowhere in the Bible are there actual, wedding ceremonial vows. But the traditional wedding vows are inspired from the Word of God. These vows are heartfelt promises from the heart in the presence of God, family, and friends to pledge their commitment to one another for a lifetime.

Five Wedding Vows

Male

*I \_\_\_\_\_, (Male) take you \_\_\_\_\_\_, (Female) to be my wedded wife.*

*To have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness or in health, to love and to cherish 'till death do us part.*

Female repeats

*I \_\_\_\_\_, (Female) take you \_\_\_\_\_\_, (Male) to be my wedded husband.*

\***What does it mean?**

“*I take thee to be my wedded wife(husband).*”

Wedded means to be connected. This first statement declares you are choosing to be a life-long partner to this person of your own free will. As

[1 Corinthians 7:39](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+7%3A39+&version=ESV),  suggests, you have free will when selecting a mate, just as you have free will to choose to follow God or not. It is also declaring that God is not responsible for your choice. We should also understand God firmly stands by the commitment you make to your spouse. Mark 10:9 says, “What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”

# *“To have and to hold, from this day forward”*

This statement is a property rights legal phrase that defines “the extent of the interest that is granted or conveyed and the conditions affecting it.” But as part of the traditional marriage vows, this is not a statement of ownership; it refers to belonging together.

[Genesis 2:24 (KJV)](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+2%3A24+&version=KJV) says, “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” The word cleave means to [join or unite](http://biblehub.com/greek/4347.htm) — to glue one thing to another. “To have and to hold” means you are promising a close marital bond that cannot be broken.

In addition, the verb “to have” means to enjoy a sexual relationship. But the meaning is deeper than that. It also means to comprehend, to understand, to know. According to the Bible, sex is all about *knowing* the other person inside and out and in all kinds of contexts.

## *“For better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health”*

This portion of the traditional marriage vows is a promise to stay faithful and committed no matter what happens. [1 Corinthians 7:28](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+7%3A28+&version=ESV) says, “Those who marry will have worldly troubles.” Life will have its ups and downs, good times, and hard times. But traveling this journey together as husband and wife is what grows and deepens our love for each other. You should vow in your marriage vows to stay together, no matter what!

*“To love and to cherish”*

Love means you will sacrifice — you will give up something highly valued for the sake of someone else considered to have great value. [Cherish means](https://www.focusonthefamily.com/marriage/what-cherishing-your-spouse-really-means/) to recognize your spouse’s incredible value as a human being, as a child of God and as the one person you have chosen to spend your life with. Love should be a part of every marriage and in marriage vows!

*“Till death us do part”*

The phrase “until death do us part” means you’re making a [lifelong commitment](https://www.focusonthefamily.com/marriage/healthy-marriage-traits/maintaining-lifelong-commitment/) — that death should be the only thing that dissolves the marriage bond. This marriage vow was really written by God in [Matthew 19:5-6.](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+19%3A4-6&version=ESV)*“ Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So, they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”*

**\*What does it mean**-Extracted from: 5 Traditional Marriage Vows: What They Mean and Why They’re Still Important, 2024, by Greg Smalley, vice president of Focus on the Family.

***A promise to God***

***A promise to each other***

**Chapter Seven:**

Keeping the Covenant Promise

***The Five Love languages***

***When the worse shows up***

***Strengthen your marriage***

**Chapter Eight:**

The Charge

**Strengthen your brother**

**Strengthen your sister**

**Live it out loud**

**Chapter Nine:**

Give Back

**Share your struggles**

By now we understand that marriage is God’s institution with instructions for how to best make our relationship work. Marriage is not always.

**Mentor a husband**

**Mentor a wife**

1. Warren W. Wiersbe, [*The Bible Exposition Commentary*](https://ref.ly/logosres/ntbec?ref=Bible.Eph5.25-33&off=918&ctx=ist+(Eph.+5%3a22%E2%80%9333).%0a~If+the+husband+makes), vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 51. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)