

Marriage

Marriage is the oldest human institution on earth. It predates the church, human government. It is found in every human culture. God has much to say on the topic of marriage.

1) Marriage is not merely a contract, it is a covenant.

2) Marriage pictures salvation and sanctification.

There is the leaving of parental authority, which pictures repentance, and the cleaving to one another which pictures faith in Christ. At salvation we form union with Christ. Marriage forms a union with one another.

Likewise in sanctification there is continual putting off of the old man (leaving), and a putting on of the new man (cleaving). This forms unity with Christ. The marriage relationship is supposed to grow the unity between two people. Just like Christians grow to be more like Christ and are more likeminded with Him, so this is to be the case with marriage partners.

3) This truth of marriage being a mirror of our walk with Christ is crucial to both our relationship with Him and with our spouse. God created marriage to not only provide companionship, but to provide a continual reflection of Christ and the church.

4) In fact, this truth has two immediate applications for Christian marriage:

i. Christians should only marry other believers (2 Cor 6:14, 1 Cor 7:39)

ii. A marriage is only as strong as the spiritual maturity of the two people. Weak Christians don't produce strong marriages. The more we are sanctified, the stronger our marriages.

Once we understand this crucial matter of God's design and purpose for marriage, we must know and obey six crucial principles.

- 1) Know and obey the roles God gives to husband and wife. We will examine these further in the next lesson. Roles determines responsibilities. Most frustration in marriage comes from one or both partners neglecting their responsibilities or from one or both taking upon themselves responsibilities that aren't theirs. We must firstly understand the roles, then we can sort our responsibilities.
- 2) Communicate biblically. Since this is a topic in itself, we will cover this in a future lesson. Problems can only be solved when we understand how we are supposed to communicate. If we do not communicate properly, our communication itself becomes part of the problem and exacerbates problems and conflicts.
- 3) Conduct your finances biblically. Discipline in monetary matters is needful for unity and success as a family. Learn and understand the principles already discussed on financial matters. Likewise, learn how to budget effectively. Ask for further resources on this important matter if you are unsure.
- 4) Recognise the importance of raising children according to the Word. This will also be a future lesson. Children can either be a wedge that divides or a force that unites. Couples must find agreement by submitting their own opinions on child-rearing to the authority of the Word of God.
- 5) Do not neglect the importance of the marriage bed (Heb 13:4). It is a God-given gift meant to increase unity in a married couple – and which in many ways reflects the current state of spiritual and emotional unity. Most sexual problems are relationship problems. Couples must not defraud each other, or use the bed as a weapon (I Cor 7:3-5).
- 6) Build a regular time of family worship together. This is crucial for enhancing spiritual unity together.