

## Biblical Watershed Issues: The Meaning of Marriage

### PURPOSE: Working as One, Enjoying God's Blessing of Children

Gen 1:27-28 So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. <sup>28</sup> Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Gen 2:24-25 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. <sup>25</sup> And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

- GOD-DESIGNED: God brings one man together with one woman. This first series of five commands places the marriage (of one man to one woman) at the very foundation of human existence. Marriage is not an appendage of God's design for humanity. Marriage is at the center of His design for humanity.
- GOD-INITIATED: The first human to human event was marriage, an event which God arranged, initiated, and superintended.
- GOD-BLESSED: The first five commands in the Bible to mankind are found in Genesis 1. All have to do directly or indirectly with the bearing of children, which God identifies as a blessing. Children are the essence of marriage, and identify the reason why one of each gender is essential.
- GOD-SANCTIFIED: Sexual intimacy was designed by God exclusively for and limited to the marriage union alone. God's beautiful physical (and spiritual) expression of love in marriage is His idea and His plan. Physical intimacy outside of marriage (which often produces children), and marriage that rejects the bearing of children are both outside the plan of God. As a choice, children without marriage and marriage without children are deviations of God's plan. As seen throughout the Bible, violations of God's design for intimacy are severely addressed. (cf. 1 Cor 7:1-9; 1 Thes 4:3-8)
- GOD-DEFINED: Throughout the Bible, this "being fruitful" defines gender roles and responsibilities. A man is seen "working his garden" assisted by his wife, as they raise the children God has given them. The Bible declares that children are gifts from God, and thus are welcomed as God gives them. Bearing children is the Bible norm, and is seen throughout the OT and NT (e.g. Ps. 127:3-5; Ps. 128; 1 Tim 2:15; 5:9-10; 5:14; Titus 3:3-5).
- GOD-RECORDED: History is told on the basis of marriage, and the result of marriage (children).

### PERMANENCE: Until Death

Matt 19:4-6 And He answered... "Have you not read that He who made *them* at the beginning 'made them male and female,' <sup>5</sup> "and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?" <sup>6</sup> "So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

### PAIN: All Marriages Are Between Sinners

Gen. 3:15-19 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel." <sup>16</sup> To the woman He said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire *shall be* for your husband, And he shall rule over you." <sup>17</sup> Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake..."

Eph. 5:22-27 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. <sup>23</sup> For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. <sup>24</sup> Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so *let the wives be* to their own husbands in everything. <sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, <sup>26</sup> that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, <sup>27</sup> that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

- SIN-TAINTED: Marriage continues after the fall as God designed it, but with impediments brought on by the difficulties which sin brings. Marriage has remained God's foundational human institution going forward.
- GOD-DIRECTED: God addresses marriage in Ephesians 5 to address these ongoing issues, commanding women to submit to their husbands, and commanding husbands to love their wives.

### PARAMETERS: Not Everything Goes

Mal 2:13-16 And this is the second thing you do: You cover the altar of the LORD with tears, With weeping and crying; So He does not regard the offering anymore, Nor receive *it* with goodwill from your hands. <sup>14</sup> Yet you say, "For what reason?" Because the LORD has been witness Between you and the wife of your youth, With whom you have dealt treacherously; Yet she is your companion And your wife by covenant. <sup>15</sup> But did He not make *them* one, Having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring. Therefore take heed to your spirit, And let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth. <sup>16</sup> "For the LORD God of Israel says That He hates divorce, For it covers one's garment with violence," Says the LORD of hosts. "Therefore take heed to your spirit, That you do not deal treacherously."

- Marriage is a God-ordained, holy institution which God loves.
- Marriage is a covenant before God to take one another as companion and mate.
- Marriage involves the intent to raise up godly offspring.
- Marriage involves the intent to stay together for life.

### PICTURE: Marriage Illustrates Something Greater

Eph. 5:32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

- HIGHER-TRUTH: Marriage pictures the relationship between Christ and the church. No other relationship does so. It assumes gender distinction and accompanying, compatible but differing roles.