

Marriage by God

Franklin Church of Christ
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AM Worship

Introduction:

One of the biggest political minefields today surrounds marriage. What is it? Who can be involved in it? As Christians, we recognize one very simple issue about marriage. God created marriage (**Genesis 2:18-25**). Marriage is not an evolutionary byproduct or a development of ever increasing civilized society. Marriage is an institution designed by God. It does not matter what our society thinks about marriage or how different cultures throughout history have viewed marriage. What matters is how God views marriage. What are God's guidelines? **Genesis 2:24** provides the outline for us: "For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh."

Discussion:

- I. Leave your father and mother
 - A. Because God fashioned woman specifically as man's helper, the man is to leave father and mother. The child's helper is his parents. However, God did not create parents to be the lifelong helper and companion. God created women to be the lifelong helper and companion of man. By extension, man is the lifelong helper and companion of woman.
 - B. As we consider leaving father and mother, there are three areas in which we must leave.
 1. *Leaving materially*: In **I Timothy 5:8**, Paul wrote, "If anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." God expects us to provide for our own. Grown children must learn to make a return to their parents, but parents of grown children are no longer responsible to provide for them. Parenting is about producing mature adult children who leave. I cannot draw exact lines. Some may choose to leave when they graduate high school, some when they graduate college. However, I can draw this line from **Genesis 2:24**, when you marry you are to leave Mom and Dad. If you cannot provide for a family of your own, you have no business getting married. Parents of grown children—I do not believe this disallows any and all help of grown children. But let me say a growing problem among people of my generation is we do not take care of ourselves. We expect mom and dad to care for us. Mom and Dad, if your child is married and you are constantly providing their wants and needs, you are not helping them. You are crippling them. You are enabling them to avoid the realities of marriage by God in which we leave our father and mother.
 2. *Leaving emotionally*: Some leave Mom and Dad materially but remain emotionally. This is marked nowhere more distinctly than when husband and wife have a disagreement and call up Mom and Dad to talk about it, commiserate or gain emotional support. What did we already note? Mom and Dad are not our lifelong helpers. Our spouse is. I understand the command to honor father and mother (**Ephesians 6:2**) is a lifelong command. However, in marriage, our responsibility, men, is to nurture and cherish our wives, not our parents (**Ephesians 5:29**). In marriage your responsibility, ladies, is to submit to and respect your husbands, not your parents (**Ephesians 5:22, 33**). If in the inevitable family conflicts that arise, you find yourselves consistently taking up the defense of your parents instead of your spouse, there is likely a problem. From experience, I can tell you how easy it is to make this mistake. Parents, if you see your grown up, married children doing this, stop them.
 3. *Leaving spiritually*: I trust your parents taught you the truth about Jesus and serving Him. Leaving your parents spiritually does not necessarily mean abandoning what they taught. If they taught error, you must abandon their erring faith. However, if they taught truth and you abandon it simply to exercise your independence, you are going to be in trouble. Do you remember the generation that did not know God of **Judges 2:10**? Leaving your parent's spiritually means developing your own faith. That is, obeying the truth because you have determined it is truth, not because you are simply doing what Mom and Dad did or simply trying to please them. Remember the principle of **Ezekiel 14:14, 20**. You cannot be saved by your parents' righteousness. You can only be saved by God's grace through your own faith.
 - C. Marriage by God means leaving Father and Mother. If you are not ready to do that, you are not ready to marry. If you have married and you haven't done that, repent and leave. It won't be easy. We need to disabuse ourselves of the notion that life and marriage are meant to be easy.

II. Be joined to your wife (husband)

- A. I like the rhyming sound of the King James Version. The man is to leave and cleave. Leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife. The word translated “be joined” or “cleave,” according to Strong’s Enhanced Lexicon is “dabaq” and means to cling to or to stay with. It is the same word used in **Deuteronomy 10:20; 11:22** to describe how the Jews were to cling to God. It describes how the punishments of God will cling to the Israelites if they disobeyed God in **Deuteronomy 28:60**. See also **Joshua 22:5; 23:8, 12; Ruth 1:14; II Kings 5:27**. On we could go. We are to leave our parents and grasp or cling to our spouses.
- B. God has provided our husbands and wives as our source of help and companionship. We should grab hold of them and never let them go. According to **Matthew 19:5-6**, God joins us together. Something amazing happens when a man and woman get married. God acts. He forges a union upon which basis we are to act accordingly.
- C. As Jesus commented on what God did in the creation of marriage, He said, “What God has joined together, let no man separate” (**Matthew 19:6**). He said this in response to the Pharisees’ question, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all?” (**Matthew 19:3**). Jesus’ answer was a resounding, “No.” It is not lawful. What God has joined together, man is not allowed to separate. Please notice, Jesus did not say “man is unable to separate.” He said man is not allowed to separate it. That means man is able to undo this work of God. However, if man separates what God has joined, man has sinned. **Malachi 2:16** is quite clear. God said, “I hate divorce.” He did not say, “I hate the divorced.” He said, “I hate divorce.”
- D. To my knowledge, according to scripture there are only two divorced people who are not sinning in their divorce. According to **Matthew 19:9**, Jesus demonstrated that divorcing your spouse because they have committed sexual immorality is lawful. Further, **I Corinthians 7:15** demonstrates that if one spouse abandons the marriage, the abandoned believer is not sinning by letting the abandoner leave. Regarding remarriage. The one who has divorced their spouse because they committed fornication may lawfully marry without committing adultery. The one who has been divorced for any other reason is only free to marry their initial lawful spouse (**I Corinthians 7:10-11**). I know this is not popular. I know how many people will cry, “But surely God doesn’t expect me to put up with such and such.” “Surely, God thinks it is better to be happy while divorced than miserable while married.” Some will tell me how bad their spouse is, “My husband calls me names.” Or “My wife wastes our money.” “My husband is a drinker and a gambler.” “My wife won’t keep the house clean.” “My husband won’t work.” “My spouse is emotionally and mentally abusive.” Friends and brethren, we must remember **Proverbs 3:5**. We are not free to submit to our understanding. We must trust the Lord. If God has set us free to divorce for any reason other than sexual immorality, please show me where He has said so. We live in a society that increasingly accepts the destruction of marriage bonds forged by God. Sadly, churches and Christians are following the same path. We have to decide if we will model our marriages after the world, or after the Word. God said, “Cleave to your spouse.”

III. Become one flesh

- A. Sadly, many people have read this and acted as though the whole purpose of marriage is in order to have sex lawfully. While sexual union is part of this statement, it is not the primary part.
- B. Consider what Paul wrote to husbands in **Ephesians 5:25-31**. Paul relates a husband and wife to Christ and the church. Notice the parallel. Because the church (Christians) are part of Christ’s one body, He nourishes and cherishes us. In like manner, because the wife is one flesh or a member of the husband’s one body, he is to nourish and cherish her. Becoming one flesh in marriage is primarily an issue of loving and voluntary union—a man and woman bonding themselves together based upon the bond God forged between them. This is the way Jesus uses the term in **Matthew 19:6**. “One flesh” in that verse did not refer to something a husband and wife do, but what the husband and wife are. Before we comment further on sexual union, let us notice who is allowed to enter this one flesh union. One man and one woman. **I Corinthians 7:2** says each man is to have his own wife and each woman her own husband. Amazingly, the Greek word for “wife” is the same as the Greek word for “woman.” The Greek word for “husband” is the same as the Greek word for “man.” One husband with one wife. One woman with one man. No other union is allowed in scripture, period.

- C. Sexual union is a physical expression of what is supposed to be taking place emotionally, mentally and spiritually. When a man and woman vow to be complementing partners with each other, they draw close to one another. They do this through common work, through conversation, through intimacy and ultimately through sexual union. Because we are “one flesh” with our spouses, we are to participate in being “one flesh” with our spouse and no one else. Paul is making this point in **I Corinthians 6:16**. When someone has sexual union with a prostitute, when someone commits fornication, they have “become one flesh” with them. The point is, we are only to become one flesh with the person to whom God has joined us and made us one flesh. We are not to become one flesh with someone to whom we are not married.
- D. Let us make sure this is absolutely clear. I especially want our young unmarrieds to understand this. Teenagers, listen up. Sex is for marriage. **Hebrews 13:4** says marriage is honorable and the marriage bed undefiled. Every other sexual contact is condemned. Young men, it does not matter how hot and bothered you are. It does not matter what your buddies are doing. What matters is will you glorify God in your body, being one spirit with Him instead of becoming one flesh with some girl to whom you are not married. Young ladies, it does not matter how much he promises he loves you. It does not matter how much you want to express love to him. What matters is will you glorify God in your body, being one spirit with Him instead of becoming one flesh with a boy to whom you are not married. If you have not yet become one by God’s joining you in marriage, you must not become one flesh in sexual union.
- E. Finally, regarding being one flesh with your spouse.
1. Men, read **Proverbs 5:15-23**. I have to be blunt here because so many dance around this subject and never nail it down clearly. We must not disperse our sexuality abroad. We must be exhilarated with our own wife’s love. We are not to be exhilarated with our fantasies of what we want our wife’s love to be. We are to be satisfied with our own wife’s breasts. We are not to go searching the internet, playboy, the Sports Illustrates Swimsuit edition or Victoria’s Secrets catalogue for someone else’s. You have heard the statement, “Just because I’m on a diet doesn’t mean I can’t look at the menu.” That is Satan’s lie. You aren’t on a diet, you are in a covenant with your wife and you must not deal with her treacherously by eating the eye-candy of other women. Keep your eyes and your hands to yourself. For men, this is the destroyer of the union with our wives. We must not allow it.
 2. Ladies, read **Titus 2:4**. The point of this verse may not be quite as obvious to you as the men’s verse was to them. This verse says you are to love your husbands. However, the word translated love here is not the one we most commonly hear about. It is not “agape” love. It is “phileo” love. This love means to esteem and adore above all others. You are not to reserve a place in your heart to esteem and adore other men above your husbands. You are not left room to fantasize that your husband is Sir Galahad. Your husband is who he is and you are to learn to esteem him and adore him above all others. Just as men have the tendency to betray their wives with their eyes, women can betray their husbands with their hearts, engendering fantasy relationships with other men—even if those fantasies do not actually include sexual union. How easy it is to wish your husband were like your friend’s husband who does all the things your man won’t. How easy it is to wish your husband were like the television character who is perfect in every way. How easy it is to wish your husband were like an ex-boyfriend, who you have now built up in your mind as the one you wish you had stayed with. For women, this is the destroyer of the union with your husbands. You must not allow it.

Conclusion:

Here is marriage by God. Leave your father and mother. Cling to your spouse. Be one flesh with each other and only each other. How does your marriage measure up?