

Introduction Are you telling the truth about God in and through your marriage? The question itself is almost unanswerable because of the questions it raises. Our understanding of marriage typically does not include the value of displaying the sufficient love and trustworthiness of God. We want to reframe the question to something like ‘As a follower of Christ, are you happy in your marriage?’ We have been trained well by a multitude of teachers ranging from movie producers to parents to the people across the street that the highest value and perhaps purpose of marriage is personal happiness and satisfaction.

The point that we need to clearly see and agree to start at is this . . . your understanding of marriage is flawed. If it wasn’t, then your joy and gratitude about marriage would be more evident. While we could choose to warn about the incredible rate and impact of divorce, the legalization of gay marriages in 5 US states and 6 European countries, the manipulative and shallow influence of romantic love in our media or the selfishness and perversion of sexual sin in our culture . . . the truth is that your perception of marriage needs upgrading. Marriage is of God, for God and by God. Is that what you believe? Is that how you behave? You need to be reminded and encouraged that marriage is good, designed by God to draw attention to his supreme worth.

Let’s read Genesis 2:18-25. Remember that these verses describe in greater and intentional detail the creation of male and female recorded in 1:27-28. These truths form the foundation of our understanding of life as we know it.

Remember/review . . . six ways in which the created intent of the verses we just read is compromised both throughout biblical history as well as in our time.

- Polygamy one man/one woman design; Gen.4:19 within 6 generations after Adam
- Divorce durability/permanence of covenant
- Adultery (prostitution) bond of fidelity
- Homosexuality rebellion against creative design Rom.1
- Sterility sometimes curse/judgment; most often God’s plan
- Gender distortion failed leadership, worth/significance defined by power/independence

. . . two simple truths about your maleness and femaleness form Genesis chapters 1 & 2:

1. God created you male or female with careful design. 1:26-28; 2:18-25

- a. Equal in personhood and significance. 1:26-27
- b. Distinct in role and authority. 1:26-27; 2:18ff
- c. Suitable in relationship and work. 2:18-25

2. God intends your personal worth to be found in him. 1:26-28; 2:18ff

- Listen to and obey God.
- Work hard
- Ask for help - male
- Embrace authority - female

This morning let's look at 3 essential perspectives for reflecting God in your marriage. These are the weightier truths that you must acknowledge if you are committed to telling the truth about God in your marriage. Compatibility, romance, happiness and hanging in there even when it hurts all have a place in your understanding of marriage, but these observations from Genesis two are primary sources. These should define our understanding of marriage rather than just simply influencing it. These truths are essential for the unmarried, remarried, never been married, married and sometimes wish I wasn't married to approach and experience marriage with joy.

1. Your marriage is good because marriage was designed by God. 18-21

Note that what was determined as not being good . . . man being alone . . . was made good by the creation of a helper fit for him. The creation of the woman and presentation of her to the man is presented as a good thing to enhance the relationship between God, man and creation. In its original design marriage is seen as good in the following ways:

- Companionship of someone quite similar to you. 18-20, 23

Covenant of companionship

- Partnership to accomplish creative intent. 1:26-28; 2:15

Reflect, represent, rule – image & likeness of God

- Union to enjoy God's perfect love. 2:24-25

Leave, cleave, naked and not ashamed

Illus/apply use something for other purposes than it was designed for . . . a hammer as a screwdriver

When marriage is used to find happiness, be fulfilled or to enjoy sex . . . it is an abuse of design

2. Your marriage is sacred because God joined you together. 2:22-25; Matt.19:6; Mk.10:9

Note that God not only made the first bride but walked her down the aisle to the man. He then officiated the wedding and somehow acted to join them together. God does marriage. In the taking and receiving of vows to leave parents and have an inseparable bond with your spouse, God joins you together. The text in Genesis indicates the sacredness of the one flesh union as completing or making valid the marriage vows and the divine act of joining the husband and wife. The holiness of your marriage shapes your thinking about . . .

- How to prepare for marriage. Genesis 2:24

- How to solve problems in your marriage. Matt. 19:6; Mk. 10:9

Illus/apply adultery, unbiblical divorce, bitterness are all sins against God before they are sins against our spouse. Heb.13:4 – sexual sin is a dishonoring of the sacredness of marriage. God is the one who needs to be happy for you to have a happy marriage. Turn to God for help and healing.

3. Your marriage is powerful because it displays a picture of God. Gen.2:24; Eph. 5:22-33

Note that the quotation of Gen.2:24 in the context of Eph. 5 clearly teaches that God’s intent all along has been that marriage be a display or reflection of his redeeming love for the church through Christ. The covenant of Genesis 2:24 is the foundation of a living display of God’s trustworthy love and care for his people. Your marriage displays God’s love for the church in Christ and the church’s response in these ways:

- Self-giving, never ending and sacrificial love for someone who does not deserve it. 2:25
- Nurturing, forgiving and merciful care for someone who may not appreciate it. 2:29
- Trusting, hopeful and joyful submission to someone who you may not understand. 2:24

Illus/apply Your marriage tells the story of the gospel. Your love, care and submission reflects and displays the creator God himself. Hosea type story and reflections of gospel. Gal.5:13-15 principle

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- 3. Your marriage is powerful because it displays a picture of God.** Gen.2:24; Eph. 5:22-33

Conclusion

Let’s conclude in worship by praying together . . . Some may want to join me at the front. This is an opportunity to express remorse, repent, seek forgiveness and renew your commitment to displaying God’s great love in how you do marriage. It is also an opportunity to turn from your self righteousness and embrace Christ as your Lord and Savior.

Pray Eph. 3:14-21