

For This Reason

I. Marriage is God's Idea and It is Good

A. God Created Male and Female

- “So God created man in his own image... *male and female he created them*. And God blessed them. And God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it...’” (Gen. 1:27-28)
- God created male and female – equal in worth, dignity, value and significance.
- God created male and female – to be fruitful through procreation and to represent God in ruling the earth...together.
- “Just as God rules...so humanity is given charge of the entire earth to rule it for God... *Together* they are to exercise [stewardship] according to the will and for the glory of God. *Together* they are to multiply and be stewards of the children given them by God. And *together* they are to subdue the earth by a division of labor that assigns to the man the primary responsibility to provide for his wife and children and to the woman the care for and nurture of her family.” (Andreas J. Kostenberger, *God, Marriage and Family*, p. 34, emphasis original)

B. God Created a “helper fit for” Adam

- “Then the LORD God said, ‘It is *not good* for that the man should be alone; I will make him *a helper fit for him.*’ (Gen. 2:18)
- God determined that it was not good for Adam be alone.
- “Fit for him” (“suitable” – NASB) – means “like him”, “corresponding to him”, and “matching him”. Her nature – physically, psychologically, spiritually – corresponded to Adam’s. In her personhood, she was equal with Adam as she, too, was an image bearer.
- “Helper” – She was given a different role. “Helper” means “help”, “support” or “aid”. As Adam’s helper, God created woman with the ability, fitness, resources and strength to complement and support her husband.

C. God Gave Away the First Bride

- “And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and *brought her to the man.*” (Gen. 2:22)
- God gave Eve to Adam in an absolutely new kind of relationship called marriage.

D. God Spoke Marriage’s Design Into Existence

- “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and *hold fast* to his wife, and they shall become *one flesh.*” (Gen. 2:24)
- In marriage, God established the uniting of a couple in a one-flesh union. “Marriage is a total commitment and a total sharing of the total person with another person until death.” (Wayne Mack, *Strengthening Your Marriage*, p.6)

1. God's intention is that when two people get married, they share everything—their bodies, their possessions, their insights, their abilities, their ideas, their problems, their successes, their sufferings, and their failures.
 - In marriage, God established a new loyalty. “Hold fast” means that the husband and wife cling to one another or adhere to one another. In the past, their loyalty was to their father and mother. Now they turn and their point of reference, their orientation and attachment is each other.
 - What does it practically mean to leave your parents and “hold fast” to your husband or wife?
 1. It means that you establish an adult-to-adult relationship with your parents.
 2. It means that you are more concerned about your spouse's ideas, opinions and practices than those of your parents.
 3. It means that after the Lord, you look primarily to your spouse for affection, approval, counsel, and advice.
 4. It means that you make the husband and wife relationship your priority human relationship.

E. God Declares that Marriage is Good

- “And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was *very good*. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.” (Gen. 1:31)

II. What is God's Purpose in Marriage?

A. Common Answers:

- It's about me...It's about you...It's about us.
- “All these views have the same fatal limitation: They are centered in man rather than in God. A truly Christian marriage starts with the reality that the institution of marriage does not

belong to us. It belongs to God. He designed marriage, and his purposes for it are paramount.” (Gary and Betsy Ricucci, *Love that Lasts*, p.19)

B. Marriage Displays Christ’s Covenant Relationship with His Church

- “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ This mystery is profound, and I am saying that *it refers to Christ and the church.*” (Eph. 5:31-32)

- “Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, *for the marriage of the Lamb has come*, and his Bride has made herself ready...” (Rev. 19:7)
 - This heavenly marriage has been God’s glorious and eternal purpose before time began. But in time and space, God wanted something on earth that would point to that ultimate reality. Marriage is a living parable, a flesh-and-blood illustration of the love and union of Christ and his church.

- “Unbeknownst to the people of Moses’ day (it was a “mystery”), marriage was **designed** by God from the beginning to be a picture or parable of the relationship between Christ and the church. Back when God was planning what marriage would be like, He planned it for this great purpose: it would give a beautiful earthly picture of the relationship that would someday come about between Christ and His church. This was not known to people for many generations, and that is why Paul can call it a “mystery.” But now in the New Testament age Paul reveals this mystery, and it is amazing.

This means that when Paul wanted to tell the Ephesians about marriage, he did not just hunt around for a helpful analogy and suddenly think that “Christ and the church” might be a good teaching illustration. No, it was much more fundamental than that: Paul saw that **when God designed the original marriage He already had Christ and the church in mind.** This is one of God's great purposes in marriage: to picture the

relationship between Christ and His redeemed people forever!”
(George Knight, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, pp. 175-176)

III. What Can We Do?—Think Together

- A. How can we grow in knowing and loving God *together*?
- B. How can we run our home and approach our relationships *together* to reflect the gospel?
- C. How can we serve our church *together* so the work of the gospel is furthered?
- D. How can we make decisions *together* so we can fulfill our calling as two-who-are-one?
- E. How can we raise children *together* so they might glorify God?
- F. How can we use the money we earn, *together*, to fulfill God’s call to subdue the earth and spread the gospel?
- G. How can we *together* overcome the disunity that our sin creates between us?
- H. How can we face trials, difficulties and sufferings of life *together*?

IV. How do we begin?

- A. Through enormous amounts of conversation, prayer and united decision making. And then doing life together.
- B. Through intentional focused effort. Experiencing the union that we created through our vows does not just happen by living together. Two becoming one is a joyful work, a fulfilling work, a productive work. But as with all of God’s gifts, it requires effort. We must apply ourselves to what he has supplied in the gift of marriage.

V. Why Marry?

When you exchange your vows and begin your new life together, something far more significant will be happening than just the union of a man and a woman. Something profoundly eternal will occur, something profoundly God-glorifying. Your earthly marriage will become a living picture of the Gospel proclaiming Christ's eternal love, Christ's unmerited grace, Christ's costly sacrifice and Christ's perfect union with His church. As you seek to glorify God by doing life together, the joy that begins on your wedding day will only grow as your union grows. And that union grows as you face life together through faith in the Giver of the gift of marriage.

Genesis 1:26-28

26Then God said, "Let us make man* in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. 28And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Genesis 2:18-25

18Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." 19So out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. 20The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of

the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. 21So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. 22And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. 23Then the man said,

"This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called Woman,
because she was taken out of
Man."

24Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. 25And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

Eph. 5:31-32

31 "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." 32This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

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1. Before this seminar, what informed your view of marriage (i.e. culture, friends, your parent's marriage, etc.)? How have the truths of Genesis chapters 1 and 2 changed or reinforced your beliefs?
2. Does God's grand purpose for marriage—to illustrate the relationship between Christ and His church – change your perspective on your upcoming marriage? If so, in what ways?
3. If marriage displays the glory of the gospel – Christ's covenant relationship with his church – what area of your life do you desire to grow and change to better represent the gospel in your forthcoming marriage?
4. Turn to Section III ("Think Together") of the outline. As you consider the areas listed:
 - i. What excites you most as you think about becoming one? Why?
 - ii. What challenges you the most? Why?