

THE PURPOSE, POWER, AND PARADOX OF MARRIAGE¹

INTRODUCTION

1. Goals for the class

- a. To align our thinking about marriage with Scripture
- b. To see the beauty of God's gift of marriage

2. How to make use of this class

- a. If you're not married
 - i. Consider the marriages of your married friends.
 - ii. Consider your potential future marriage.
 - iii. Consider the beauty of what God has designed.
- b. If you are married
 - i. **Don't** let the ideal discourage you.
 - ii. **Don't** use this class as leverage in arguments with your spouse.
 - iii. **Do** use this class to examine your purposes for your marriage in light of God's purpose for your marriage.
 - iv. **Do** use this class as a mirror to your own attitudes, instincts, assumptions, and struggles in marriage.

THE PURPOSE OF MARRIAGE

1. The purpose for humanity

Then 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." 27 So God created man in his

¹In addition to the resources cited, this course was developed in part from the "Marriage" core seminar at Capitol Hill Baptist Church (Washington, D.C.), John Kimbell's "Biblical Marriage" class at Clifton Baptist Church (Louisville, KY), and Rick Anderson's "Back to Marriage Basics" class at Faith Community Church (Oxnard, CA).

Biblical Marriage

Lesson 1

own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. 28 And 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” (Gen. 1:26–28).

- a. Our purpose as human beings
 - i. Perceive the glory of God.
 - ii. Portray the glory of God.
 - b. This purpose applies to man and woman *together*.
 - c. We work out this purpose through filling the earth and subduing it.
- 2. The purpose of marriage is deeper than what it produces (e.g. children, companionship, community, etc.).**

“It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper corresponding to him” (Gen. 2:18).

“This mystery is profound, but I am talking about Christ and the church” (Eph. 5:32).

- 3. If marriage is a portrayal of God’s love for us, who is watching this portrayal?**
- a. You
 - b. Your spouse
 - c. Your kids
 - d. God
 - e. Those around you
- 4. If God would be at the center of your marriage, you must remember that the purpose of your marriage is to perceive and portray his glory.**
- a. You need this perspective when you encounter your spouse’s sin—and your own.
 - b. You need this perspective when you need to forgive.
 - c. You need this perspective when you’re ten years in and you realize that this marriage will not be what you hoped for on your wedding day.

Biblical Marriage

Lesson 1

5. The purpose of marriage isn't fundamentally in what it produces but in what it shows—about God—to the two of you.
 - a. Example of decision-making
 - b. Example of conflict-resolving

THE POWER OF MARRIAGE

"It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper corresponding to him" (Gen. 2:18).

1. The differences are the point of marriage . . .
2. . . .and yet, the differences are what will drive you crazy.
3. A key task in the early years of marriage: learn to trust the differences between you.

THE PARADOX OF MARRIAGE

1. They are different (Gen. 2:18, 20) . . . yet one (Gen. 2:24).

"Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper corresponding to him." 19 The Lord God formed out of the ground every wild animal and every bird of the sky, and brought each to the man to see what he would call it. And whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. 20 The man gave names to all the livestock, to the birds of the sky, and to every wild animal; but for the man no helper was found corresponding to him. 21 So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to come over the man, and he slept. God took one of his ribs and closed the flesh at that place. 22 Then the Lord God made the rib he had taken from the man into a woman and brought her to the man. 23 And the man said:

This one, at last, is bone of my bone
and flesh of my flesh;
this one will be called "woman,"
for she was taken from man.

Biblical Marriage

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24 This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh. 25 Both the man and his wife were naked, yet felt no shame” (Gen. 2:18–25).

- a. Leaving
- b. Cleaving/Holding Fast
 - i. Implication: fidelity to one another
 - ii. Implication: reorienting to make your spouse primary

“It is not the same to say that you approach marriage as a lawyer, teacher, architect, or whatever you do. Married people are not to balance career with marriage, but to approach career as a married person” (Mike Gilbert-Smith).

2. Three tools to bridge from Genesis 2:20 (husband and wife are different) to Genesis 2:24 (husband and wife are one flesh)

- a. Roles
- b. Communication
- c. Sex

CONCLUSION

“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you” (Matt. 6:33).

PREPARATION FOR NEXT LESSON

- Read “Moses on Marriage” by Daryl Wingerd at bulletininserts.org/moses-on-marriage