

Defining Marriage

Message 2 of 3 in the series: "Define the Relationship"

A. The Bible says **God** came up with the definition of marriage as the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant relationship for a lifetime.

"Haven't you read the Scriptures?" Jesus replied. "They record that from the beginning **God made them male and female.**" And he said, "This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one." Matthew 19:4-5 (NLT)

B. The Bible clearly defines three good reasons God designed marriage the way He did.

1. **Companionship:** "Then the LORD God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. **I will make a helper who is just right for him.**' ... So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. While the man slept, the LORD God took out one of the man's ribs and closed up the opening. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib, and he brought her to the man. 'At last!' the man exclaimed. 'This one is bone from my bone, and flesh from my flesh! She will be called "woman," because she was taken from "man.'" This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one." Genesis 2:18, 21-24 (NLT)

Life Application: We need to look for ways to complement each other NOT compete with each other.

"Wives, **understand and support your husbands** by submitting to them in ways that honor the Master."
Colossians 3:18 (MSG)

"In the same way, you husbands must **give honor to your wives.** Treat your wife with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God's gift of new life. Treat her as you should so your prayers will not be hindered." 1 Peter 3:7 (NLT)

2. **Godly Children:** "...God blessed them and said, 'Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it.'" Genesis 1:28a (NLT)

"Didn't the LORD make you one with your wife? In body and spirit you are his. **And what does he want? Godly children from your union.** So guard your heart; remain loyal to the wife of your youth."
Malachi 2:15 (NLT)

3. **Modeling God's Love:** "As the Scriptures say, 'A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.' This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one. So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband." Ephesians 5:31-33 (NLT)

"No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and **his love is brought to full expression in us.**" 1 John 4:12 (NLT)

C. The Bible clearly defines three threats to godly marriages.

1. **The World:** "Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions." 1 John 2:15-16a (NLT)
 - Many in our world are working hard to **redefine marriage** apart from Biblical standards.
 - **Living together** is NOT the same as marriage.
 - Our **fast-paced lifestyles** put incredible pressure on marriage and family relationships.
2. **The Flesh:** "Give honor to marriage and remain faithful to one another in marriage. God will surely judge people who are immoral and those who commit adultery." Hebrews 13:4 (NLT)
 - We must not indulge in **sinful practices** that inflame lust and tempt us to sexual immorality. (pornography, dirty jokes, immodest clothing, inappropriate relationships, etc.)
 - We must not embrace **selfish motives.** ("What's in it for me?" "My needs aren't being met!")
 - We must not embrace **unrealistic expectations.** (unending romance and passion, no conflict, having it all, etc.)

3. The devil: "Stay alert! Watch out for **your great enemy, the devil**. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour." 1 Peter 5:8 (NLT)

"In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and **do not give the devil a foothold**." Ephesians 4:26-27 (NIV)

D. The Bible clearly defines three sources of help for godly marriages.

1. God's Word: "By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence. And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. **These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires.**" 2 Peter 1:3-4 (NLT)

2. The Holy Spirit: "For God is working in you, **giving you the desire and the power** to do what pleases him." Philippians 2:13 (NLT)

3. Other Christians: "Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, **you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path**. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ." Galatians 6:1-2 (NLT)

John Schmidt • 02-13-22 • john@centeringlives.com

Connect Group Questions

Read Genesis 2:18-24 & Matthew 19:4-5. Then discuss the following questions:

1. Who has the best marriage you know? What's their secret?
2. Some husbands and wives view their differences as the spice of life while others allow their differences to drive them crazy. Why do you think God made men and women so different from each other?
3. What was your parents' marriage like? How did their marriage shape your understanding of marriage?
4. Centerpoint's Statement of Beliefs says this about marriage: "God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption. Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant relationship for a lifetime. Marriage is God's unique gift to provide the means for intimate companionship, for sexual expression according to Biblical standards, and for procreation of the human race. Marriage reveals to us the mysterious union which exists between Christ and His church." Do you think some people might find this statement offensive? If so, why?
5. Discuss the following three reasons God defined marriage as the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant relationship for a lifetime:
 - Companionship (Genesis 2:18, Colossians 3:18-19, 1 Peter 3:7)
 - Godly Children (Genesis 1:28, Malachi 2:15, Psalm 127:3)
 - Modeling God's Love (Ephesians 5:31-33, 1 John 4:12)
6. Discuss the following three threats to godly marriages:
 - The World (1 John 2:15-16)
 - The Flesh (Hebrews 13:4)
 - The devil (1 Peter 5:8, Ephesians 4:26-27)
7. Discuss the following three sources of help for godly marriages:
 - God's Word (2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:3-4)
 - The Holy Spirit (Philippians 2:13)
 - Other Christians (Galatians 6:1-2)

Resources:

Love & Respect by Dr. Emerson Eggerichs, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2004.
The Five Love Languages by Dr. Gary Chapman, Northfield Publishing, 1995.