

Genesis: It All Starts Here

The First Wedding Ceremony

Intro: Marriage is a matter of incredible importance, but it has become politicized in America to such a degree that the institution has lost any objective definition. The cultural climate of our day is marked by a decline of personal responsibility and fidelity, and these are certainly having a dramatic impact on the institution of marriage. As Christians strive towards living in light of biblical standards they will inevitably appear more and more peculiar. This definite departure from worldly patterns is quite distinguishable on the matter of marriage, but all is as Christ told us it would be. May God help us to live by His design and for His glory.

Genesis 2:18-25

Pop-Psychology and Modern Marriage Advice

Ways to Divorce-Proof your Marriage (*Real Simple* magazine):

- 1) Don't physically fight each other in public.
- 2) When you are arguing, imagine your partner is a small child.
- 3) When you give gifts, put at least 1 minute of thought into them.

Ways to make your Marriage Stronger (*Bridal Guide*):

- 1) Eat Healthy.
- 2) Drop and/or Avoid hot-button issues.
- 3) Divide Responsibility for Household chores.

Is An Unconventional Marriage The Key To Marital Bliss? (*Huffington Post*)

"It [Marital Bliss] is about finding a way to ***stay attracted to the other person and to continue to be satisfied*** intellectually, emotionally, and sexually in the relationship.

While some couples do manage to stay together despite these challenges, *as the world gets more and more complicated*, so too will the traditional marriage model.

For these reasons, an ***unconventional marriage*** [undefined, unregulated, unrecognizable] may be the key to *long-term relationship success*. This may include (1) being married but living separately, (2) having an open marriage, (3) living together only part of the year, (4) having a common law marriage, or (5) ***any other arrangement that works for the couple's situation***" (emphasis added).

Message Outline:

- (1) Who Designed Marriage? and Why must this question start the conversation?
- (2) What does Genesis 2 tell us about the Definition of Marriage?
- (3) What hope is there for my Marriage in the Gospel?
- (4) How can we Defend God's design for Marriage right now?

Exposition:

1. Who Designed Marriage? & Why must this question start the conversation?

First, Who designed Marriage?

- A. Genesis 2:18-25 sure does look like a wedding ceremony.
 - i. God Himself "brings" the wife-to-be to the groom (v22)
 1. This seems like a giving away of the bride
 - ii. The bride is received by the groom with words of affirmation (v23)
 - iii. The bride takes her name from the groom (v23)
 - iv. God pronounces the bride and groom as having become "one" where once there were "two" (v24)
 - v. God informs the reader that the newly married couple were utterly exposed to each other (naked), and neither was "ashamed" (v25)
 - vi. God uses this single ceremony to establish a "leaving" and "cleaving" for all future generations (v24)
- B. We can know that this passage was certainly a wedding ceremony because of the references to it elsewhere in the Bible.
 - i. Some Pharisees asked Jesus if it was allowable/legal to divorce, and Jesus answered, "*6 from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.'* *7 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, 8 and the two shall become one flesh.'* *So they are no longer two but one flesh. 9 What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate*" (Mark 10:6-9).¹

¹ See also Matthew 19 for another report of the same exchange.

1. We can see at least a couple of things here: (1) Jesus thinks Genesis 2 lays a foundation for the institution of marriage, and (2) Jesus believes that the content in Genesis 2 is still prescriptive and binding

Clearly, the Bible claims that God designed Marriage!

Second, Why must this issue start the conversation?

- C. The “Designer” or Inventor of Marriage is the fundamental question.
 - i. If God invented/designed Marriage, then there is absolutely no justification for redefining it.
 1. We can no more redefine “Marriage” than we can redefine “Human” or “Male” or “Female.”
 - ii. If God did not invent/design Marriage, if it is indeed merely a social construct of societal preference or pragmatics, then there is no reason to limit marriage in any way.
 1. If there is no absolute definition for the term “Marriage,” then there is absolutely no defining the term at all.

2. What does Genesis 2 tell us about the Definition of Marriage?

- A. Genesis 2 looks like a wedding ceremony, because that’s where the traditional ceremony originates.
 - i. The marital relationship is a human-to-human relationship under the human-to-God relationship.
 1. All horizontal relationships are directly tied to vertical relationship, but marriage is especially presented in this way.
 - a. This is the basis for pastoral officers
 - ii. The groom is taking responsibility for the care and leadership of the bride (v22)
 1. This is a passing of responsibility (including love, care, protection, provision, leadership, and more) from one party to another.

- a. This is where *Father giving away the bride* originates
-
- iii. The bride and groom are equal and complementary – the same but different (v23)
 1. The bride is received as equal in value and suitable in relationship to the groom – she is flesh of his flesh, bone of his bone (v24), and a suitable helper for him (v18).

 - iv. The bride properly receives a new name (v23)
 1. Adam names his bride “Woman” (v23), and later “Eve” (3:20).
 2. This, coupled with the reality of his responsibility, is sufficient ground for a wife to take the name of her husband, but there is more... (see next point)

 - v. The “two” become “one” (v24)
 1. This is profound! Let’s mention a couple of things here.
 - a. **First**, the “two” becoming “one” has much to do with personal identity.
 - i. The husband is no longer defined by his child-like dependence upon his family, but he is now marked out as a man who is responsible for the care of another.
 - ii. The wife is no longer defined by her child-like dependence upon her family, but she is now marked out as a helpmate and companion of another.
 1. Note the common final pronouncement of the wedding ceremony:
“Ladies and gentlemen, I give you Mr. and Mrs. *Name of Husband*.”
 - b. **Second**, there is much more than merely physical relationship here, but there is not less.
 - i. The male and female literally become one flesh in the marriage relationship.

1. The Apostle Paul makes a direct correlation between this “one flesh” statement and physical intimacy (1 Cor. 6:16).
- ii. Because “two become one” refers to physical intimacy and more, we are not to disjoint physical intimacy from marriage.
 1. In marriage, sexual enjoyment (1) strengthens the bond of intimacy [1 Cor. 7:4], (2) expresses godly and good sexual desire [1 Cor. 7:2], (3) encourages God-glorifying pleasure [SoS. 1:1-4], and (4) provides the appropriate foundation for procreation [Gen. 1:22, 9:1].
 2. Outside of marriage, sexual thoughts, words, and actions are (1) sinful [Col. 3:5], (2) personally damaging [1 Cor. 6:18], and (3) destructive to society in general [Prov. 23:26-28].
- vi. The husband and wife are utterly exposed to each other or “naked and unashamed” (v25)
 1. More on this Next Week...
- vii. The husband and wife depart familial dependency and form a new family (v24)
 1. In a real sense, the married couple is no longer under the covering/headship of their respective parents.
 - a. The obligation to “obey” Father and Mother (Eph. 6:1-4), becomes an obligation to “submit” (Eph. 5:22) and “love” (Eph. 5:25), respectively.
 - b. This does not sever all familial obligations, such as caring for parents in their time of need (Matt. 15:1-9).
- viii. The “1 man + 1 woman” sequence is essential.
 1. Procreation, Complementarity, Leadership, and suitable Companionship are utterly obliterated by any adjustment.

3. What hope is there for my Marriage in the Gospel?

A. First, we must admit that there is a standard to which we are obligated.

i. We cannot criticize those who would redefine marriage by adjusting the “1 man + 1 woman” sequence while we ignore our own disregard for any other essential element of the definition.

1. Failure of godly male leadership

2. Sexual immorality before and/or during marriage

3. Separating what God has joined together for no more than selfishness

B. Second, we must mutually trust Christ through our failures.

i. We must look to Christ as the One who covers us with His righteousness and gives us new desires (2 Cor. 5:17).

ii. When we fail in various ways, we (husbands and wives) should confront sin (Matt. 18:15) and bear with each other (Gal. 6:1-2).

iii. We must rely upon other godly men and women for accountability and encouragement.

1. 1 Corinthians 6:1-6 – “1 When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? 2 Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, **are you incompetent to try trivial cases?** 3 Do you not know that we are to judge angels? **How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life!** 4 So if you have such cases, why do you lay them before those who have no standing in the church? 5 I say this to your shame. **Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers,** 6 but brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers?”

4. How can we Defend God's design for Marriage right now?

- A. We can Defend God's Design in our own Marriage.
 - i. Husbands can recommit to godly leadership, and Wives can recommit to godly help.
 - ii. Husbands can demonstrate Christ-like love, and Wives can demonstrate Christ-like submission.
 - iii. Husbands can take up their God-given responsibility to lead their wife and children in Christ-ward pursuit, and Wives can encourage and spur their husbands on as they do it.
 - iv. Husbands and Wives can spend more time and effort in cultivating a healthy relationship with each other.
 - v. Husbands and Wives can be honest about their struggles and fears – honest with each other and honest with godly friends.
 - vi. Husbands and Wives can commit to stay in this – no matter what.
- B. We can Defend God's Design for marriage on behalf of our friends and family.
 - i. We can speak up when we see our friends and family struggling.
 - ii. We can speak up when we see our friends and family taking marriage lightly.
 - iii. We can be quick listen for the hurt and pain of failure, and quick to share the Gospel of grace.
 - iv. We can empathetically come alongside those who defy God's design, and earn the right to speak truth in love.

My Prayers

- May God make us a church family that honestly and faithfully pursues Christ together
- May God cultivate an atmosphere of grace and sanctification among FBC Diana
- May God glorify Himself in the real transformation of our lives