



Gospel-Centered Families

Marriage Part 1: Gospel-Centered Purpose

Genesis 2:18-25, Ephesians 5:31-33

How to Prepare

Begin preparing by reading the full passage a few times. Then answer the questions for yourself. Then think about how your Small Group might answer them. Try re-wording the questions to fit you and your Small Group. Don't feel tied down to the discussion guide, just be sure to discuss the main point of the text in your conversations.

Resources-

<https://www.gotquestions.org/God-design-marriage.html>

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-surpassing-goal-marriage-lived-for-the-glory-of-god>

<https://learn.ligonier.org/podcasts/things-unseen-with-sinclair-ferguson/when-two-become-one>

Sermon Outline:

Genesis 2:18-25, Ephesians 5:31-33

1. Marriage Is for Companionship Within Humanity. Genesis 2:18-22
2. Marriage Is a Covenant Between a Man, a Woman, and God.
Genesis 2:23-25
3. Marriage Is a Copy of the Gospel. Ephesians 5:31-33

Genesis 2:18-25

The Creation of Man and Woman

18 Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him."

19 Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name.

20 The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.

21 So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place.

22 The Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man.

23 The man said,

"This is now bone of my bones,

And flesh of my flesh;
She shall be called Woman,
Because she was taken out
of Man."

24 For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

Ephesians 5:31-33

Marriage Like Christ and the Church

31 For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

33 Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.



Discussion Questions

Ask a volunteer to read Genesis 2:18-25 & Ephesians 5:31-33.

INTRODUCTION

Here is a question or two to help introduce the topic and jump-start discussion.

1. What stood out to you from the sermon or from the text this week? What has God shown you about the centrality of the gospel in your life this week?

UNDERSTANDING AND APPLICATION

These questions should help your Small Group dig deeper into the text and then apply it to your lives today.

I. Marriage Is for Companionship Within Humanity. Genesis 2:18-22

2. Why do humans desire and require companionship? In what way is the companionship of marriage the foundation and source of all other human companionship?

(God designed us to be relational beings. First in relationship to Him, but also in relationship with each other. God used Adam's "aloneness" to show us this need, and He invented marriage as the fundamental human relationship. It is through marriage that other people come into existence and create new relationships. Other kinds of relationships, like fraternal, sororal, or peer friendships are very meaningful and important relationships given to us by God. But the marriage relationship is the first one He created, and the primary one for the flourishing of humanity.)

3. How does the idea of "companionship" in marriage extend beyond simply enjoying each other's presence to actively supporting and complementing one another?

4. How important is the idea of friendship between spouses in marriage? In what practical ways can husbands and wives foster deeper companionship within their marriage?

(Since marriage was made by God partially for companionship, then friendship is a very important and necessary aspect of a godly marriage. Regular dates, intentional communication, and spiritual conversations are some main ways to help foster deeper friendship.)

II. Marriage Is a Covenant Between a Man, a Woman, and God. Genesis 2:23-25

5. What does it mean for marriage to be a covenant? How does God's involvement as the third party in the marriage covenant impact the way a couple should approach their relationship?

(Marriage is a covenant before God between one man and one woman that they would be joined together in a love that will persevere. A covenant is essentially a contract, but it is more than that. It is a holy contract between you and God. And because marriage is a covenant that points directly to our relationship with Christ, it is an extremely important covenant.)



6. What does it mean that marriage as God designed it is to be exclusive, romantic, and lifelong? What are some typical barriers to people living out exclusive, romantic, and lifelong marriages?

(The relationship between a husband and wife is not open to parental oversight, involvement with other partners, or the manipulation of children's desires. It is good to receive wise counsel from parents and to take into account the hearts of our children. But the relationship between a husband and a wife really only involves three people... the husband, the wife, and the Lord. No one else is to enter that sacred relationship. One extremely dangerous barrier to living this out is having the mindset that says, "that might be a possibility for other people, but not for us." That kind of thinking is already on the path to improper interference in the marriage.)

7. How should the involvement of God in the covenant of marriage encourage spouses? Why must we rely on God for the fulfilment of our marriage covenant?

(None of us can perfectly uphold our covenant vows, because we are sinners. And without the Lord, none of us could be considered faithful to our covenant vows. Without the Lord, none of us could forgive, or receive forgiveness, when we fail to perfectly uphold our vows. But because the Lord is involved, when we seek His involvement, He leads us to humility, love, faithfulness, and forgiveness in our marriages. This is so encouraging if we will just seek and abide in His leading in our lives.)

III. Marriage Is a Copy of the Gospel. Ephesians 5:31-33

8. What did Pastor Brian mean by saying that marriage is a "copy of the Gospel," and how does understanding that influence a spouse's goals within the marriage?

(According to the New Testament, marriage is a mirror reflection of the gospel. It demonstrates the loving and sacrificial pursuit of Christ and the loving and receptive submission of His "bride," the Church. Christ humbly sacrificed Himself for His "bride." And the Church, His "bride," humbly follows His lead. When a spouse understands this purpose, his or her goals are no longer about getting what they want from the other, but rather sacrificially helping the other glorify God in their lives.)

9. How does the concept of mutual submission (Ephesians 5:21, though not explicitly listed, it's foundational to the context of 5:31-33) play into marriage being a copy of the Gospel?

(Mutual submission of love and respect requires one to sacrifice of themselves to love the other. This is where sacrificial love plays out. Instead of seeking your own wants and desires, you seek your spouse's well-being and desires. Each person in marriage submits their own will to that of the other and seeks to benefit and bless the other over oneself.)

10. If marriage is meant to display the Gospel, what are some practical ways couples can live out this truth in their daily interactions and in their witness to the world?

Commentary (from ESV Study Bible)

Gen. 2:18–25 These verses describe how God provides a suitable companion for the man.

Gen. 2:18 Not good is a jarring contrast to 1:31; clearly, the situation here has not yet arrived to “very good.” I will make him can also be translated “I will make for him,” which explains Paul’s statement in 1 Cor. 11:9. In order to find the man a helper fit for him, God brings to him all the livestock, birds, and beasts of the field. None of these, however, proves to be “fit for” the man. “Helper” (Hb. *‘ezer*) is one who supplies strength in the area that is lacking in “the helped.” The term does not imply that the helper is either stronger or weaker than the one helped. “Fit for him” or “matching him” (cf. ESV footnote) is not the same as “like him”: a wife is not her husband’s clone but complements him.

Gen. 2:20 The man gave names. By naming the animals, the man demonstrates his authority over all the other creatures. Adam. See note on 5:1–2.

Gen. 2:23–24 When no suitable companion is found among all the living beings, God fashions a woman from the man’s own flesh. The text highlights the sense of oneness that exists between the man and the woman. Adam joyfully proclaims, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.” This terminology is used elsewhere of blood relatives (29:14). This sentence and the story of Eve’s creation both make the point that marriage creates the closest of all human relationships. It is also important to observe that God creates only one Eve for Adam, not several Eves or another Adam. This points to heterosexual monogamy as the divine pattern for marriage that God established at creation. Moreover, the kinship between husband and wife creates obligations that override even duty to one’s parents (therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, 2:24). In ancient Israel, sons did not move away when they married, but lived near their parents and inherited their father’s land. They “left” their parents in the sense of putting their wife’s welfare before that of their parents. The term “hold fast” is used elsewhere for practicing covenant faithfulness (e.g., Deut. 10:20; see how Paul brings these texts together in 1 Cor. 6:16–17); thus, other Bible texts can call marriage a “covenant” (e.g., Prov. 2:17; Mal. 2:14). Paul’s teaching on marriage in Eph. 5:25–32 is founded on this text. The sense of being made for each other is further reflected in a wordplay involving the terms “man” and “woman”; in Hebrew these are, respectively, *‘ish* and *‘ishshah*. As a result of this special affiliation, Gen. 2:24 observes that when a man leaves his parents and takes a wife, they shall become one flesh, i.e., one unit (a union of man and woman, consummated in sexual intercourse). Jesus appeals to this verse and 1:27 in setting out his view of marriage (Matt. 19:4–5).



Commentary (from ESV Study Bible)

Gen. 2:25 naked and . . . not ashamed. This final description in vv. 18–25 offers a picture of innocent delight and anticipates further developments in the story. The subject of the couple's nakedness is picked up in 3:7–11, and a play on the similar sounds of the words "naked" (Hb. 'arummim) and "crafty" (3:1, Hb. 'arum) links the end of this episode with the start of the next.

Eph. 5:31 one flesh. The command for a husband to love his wife as he loves "his own flesh" (v. 29) originates in the creation reality that God joins husbands and wives together to "become one flesh." Paul's quotation is from Gen. 2:24, speaking of marriage before there was any sin in the world; see also Matt. 19:5; Mark 10:8; 1 Cor. 6:16.

Eph. 5:32 By mystery Paul means the hidden plan of God that has come to fulfillment in Christ Jesus (see 1:9; 3:3–4, 9; and 6:19), thus his quotation about marriage from Genesis 2 (in Eph. 5:31) ties in to the relationship between Christ and his church. Paul's meaning is profound: he interprets the original creation of the husband-and-wife union as itself modeled on Christ's forthcoming union with the church as his "body" (see v. 23). Therefore, marriage from the beginning of creation (Genesis 1) was created by God to be a reflection of and patterned after Christ's relation to the church. Thus Paul's commands regarding the roles of husbands and wives do not merely reflect the culture of his day but present God's ideal for all marriages at all times, as exemplified by the relationship between the bride of Christ (the church) and Christ himself, the Son of God.