

A PROFOUND MYSTERY: THE GOSPEL OF MARRIAGE

HOT TOPIC: SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

MARCH 2, 2025

LESSON ONE: MALE AND FEMALE, HE CREATED THEM

(Genesis 1:27-28; Genesis 2:23-24; I Peter 3:7)

INTRODUCTION: This month's study explores the biblical understanding of marriage, and its relevance in a counter-cultural society. Marriage between a man and a woman was ordained and instituted by God. It is a covenant relationship and agreement with the purpose of companionship, and unity that reflect the relationship between Christ and His Bride, THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH.

This union provides a structural framework for raising children, stability, and commitment within the family; it reduces conflict within a community or a cultural society.

Though some churches/denominations accept *same-sex marriage*, because they interpret the Bible to support the idea of equality and love for all people, regardless of sexual orientation; believing that a committed *same-sex relationship* can reflect the same as a heterosexual marriage and should be recognized as such – this is often based on Christian values of love, compassion, and inclusion.

For millennia, civilizations have defined marriage as an exclusive, permanent union of a man and a woman. Yet, politicians have voted to defend this definition of marriage in what was called *The Defense of Marriage Act*. However, the Supreme Court struck down key provisions of that *Act*, paving the way for the complete redefinition of marriage across our culture. In the days that followed, states began officially defining marriage according to different terms, now notably *same-sex relationships* to be classified as so-called marriages.

Marriage has been defined as an exclusive, permanent union of a man and a woman. The *first two chapters of Genesis* tells us what God says and makes it clear that God created male and female for a reason:

- Gen. 1:27-28 – The Bible describes the origin of the sexes as a creative act of God.
- Gen. 2:23-24 – God recognizes that it is not good for a man to be alone and makes a helper for him out of his own rib.
- V. 24 – God instituted a monogamous marriage bond that illustrates the relationship that exists between Christ and the Church.
- I Peter 3:7 – The Apostle, Peter, turns to husbands and shows the corresponding duties they must fulfill; to live considerately with their wives.

MARCH 9, 2025

LESSON TWO:

CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

(Ephesians 5:23-27,32; Luke 22:42b; I Corinthians 11:3; 12:13; Gal.3:28; Gen.2:24)

INTRODUCTION: The union of a man and woman in marriage is a mystery because it conceals, as in a parable, a truth about Christ and the Church. The Divine reality hidden in the metaphor of marriage is that God ordained a permanent union between His Son and the Church. Human marriage is the earthly image of this Divine Plan. As God willed for Christ and the Church to become ONE BODY, so He willed for marriage to reflect this pattern – that the husband and wife become one flesh.

God had a purpose the way He designed marriage, and NOT *same-sex marriage*. That purpose was revealed when Christ died on the cross, rose from the dead, and instituted the Church.

Marriage pictures Christ and the Church, where God intends to portray Christ's love for the Church and Church's love for Christ.

- Eph. 5:23-27 – The reason for the wife's submission is that the husband is her head.
- V. 24 – Nothing could more exalt the role of the wife, than comparing it to the role of the church as the Bride of Christ.
- V. 25 – If Paul's instructions were that husbands are called to a level of dedication, which includes love unto death. Husbands love your wives, just as Christ loved the Church.
- V. 26 – At this present time, God's Love for the Church is shown in His Work of Sanctification.
- V. 27 – In the past, Christ's Love was manifested in our redemption.
- Luke 22:42b – Jesus was fully submitting to God's Will and embracing His human Will – Jesus said this while facing His crucifixion and was honestly speaking with God. (This verse means OBEDIENCE – COMFORT -WORSHIP – INTIMACY WITH GOD - SACRIFICE.)
- I Cor. – 11:3 -Christ has authority over mankind; the husband has authority over his wife.

At the start, it should be emphasized that subjection *does not* mean inferiority. Christ is subject to God the Father, but not inferior to Him. Neither a woman inferior to man, though she is subordinate to him.

God created marriage as a gift to all the world as a picture reminder of the Gospel. Marriage is a picture of Christ and the Church.

MARCH 16, 2025

LESSON THREE: THE DISTORTION OF GOD'S DESIGN

(Genesis 2:16-17; Genesis 3: 1-6, 12, 16)

INTRODUCTION: God's design is *not the picture* of marriage that the world identifies; nor are the Laws in various states, or the Supreme Court. The primary reason the Gospel is not clear in marriages across our culture - is that the Gospel has not been clear about marriages in the churches. (i.e., What is being taught and what are some churches settling for?) God's plan and pattern for marriage to portray the Gospel have been *denied, distorted, and disparaged* in the lives of those who claim to follow Christ.

Here is God's Design for Marriage:

- Gen. 2:16-17– The Divine commandment given to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. It emphasizes obedience and the consequences of disobedience.
- V.17 – God's warning to Adam that he will die, if he eats the fruit from the *Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*.
- Genesis 3:1-6 - (The Fall of Man) The serpent's design in deceiving *the couple* was deliberate subversion of God's design in creating the couple. The serpent approaches, not the man, but the woman.
- V. 1 -SERPENT'S TEMPTATION – The serpent described as more cunning than any other animal.
- V. 2 -3- EVE'S RESPONSE – Eve clarifies that they may eat from every tree, except the one in the middle of the garden, and highlights the dangers of engaging in dialogue with temptation, and the importance of holding fast to God's Word.
- V. 4 – 5 -THE SERPENT'S LIE -The serpent contradicts God, telling Eve that she will not die, but instead, she will become like God, knowing *good and evil*, if she eats the fruit.
- V. 6 – EVE'S DECISION – Seeing that the fruit was good for food, pleasing to the eye, and desirable for gaining wisdom, Eve takes the fruit and eats it. She then gives some to Adam, who eats as well.
- Responsibility, sin, human nature, and Adam's blame conveys important messages in Gen 3: 12, and V. 16 – The Woman would desire to be in control of her husband, but he would be the master.

Husbands will go back and forth between their responsibility to love and abuse their authority to lead. Wives, in response, will distrust such love and defy such leadership. In the process, they'll completely undercut Christ's gracious sacrifice on the Cross compels glad submission in the Church. All of us have Distorted God's Design in some way, whether in the past or present marriages or sin amid singleness, but The Gospel is Good News for all. God's Design is to be filled with love, joy, peace, unity, and purpose.

MARCH 23, 2025

LESSON FOUR: COUNTERCULTURAL MARRIAGE

(Ephesians 5:25; I Corinthians 7:2, 7, 26, 35)

What does it look like for Christians to *counterculture* in marriage. None of us has the perfect marriage, and all of us have distorted God's Design. God's grace gives us an understanding of the Gospel, and the role of marriage. God can redeem and reconcile this most important relationship, and He is willing to strengthen and sustain all who will trust His Ways and live according to His Word.

Personal, not political, action is the primary starting point of Countercultural marriage. The Bible's instructions:

- Eph. 5:25 – The Duty of the husbands. They are to love their wives, just as Christ also loved the Church. Christ's love for the Church is presented in three majestic movements, from the *past*, to the *present*, and to the *future*.

In Paul's final instructions to the husbands and wives; "Let each one of you love his wife as himself."

He goes on to say, "wives continue to respect and obey your husbands."

The union of a Christian husband and wife is to be permanent, intimate, and inseparable. God has designed men to take the initiative in the marriage relationship.

- I Cor. 7:7 – Paul now begins advice to the *unmarried* – the scripture speaks clearly to single men and women – for those who have a strong sexual desire for marriage – I Cor.7:2.

He advocated remaining *single* in favor of "undivided devotion to the Lord - I Cor. 7:26,35.

God has ultimately designed marriage not to satisfy our needs, but to display His Glory in the Gospel. When we realize this, we recognize that if we want to declare the Gospel, we must defend Marriage, according to The Word, which does not include *same-sex* marriage.

The church can no longer take lightly the state of marriage in America. We have a Pattern to live by – GOD'S WORD. The church must uphold the Christian standards, and these Biblical standards must *not* be lowered.

The Church must continue to teach, preach, model, and nurture the highest scriptural values of sexual morality, marriage, and family life. **WE MUST UNDERSCORE COMMITMENT TO THESE IDEALS, AS PART OF LIFE IN CHRIST.** In a sense, we must create a moral and marital countercultural for coming generations.

MARCH 30, 2025

LESSON FIVE:

ONCE AND FOR ALL

(Genesis 2:24-25; Matthew 19:1-12; Revelation 19:6-7, 9)

As Christians, it is right to feel distressed about the redefinition of marriage in our culture. *Same-Sex* marriage is now recognized as a legitimate institution in the eyes of the Government. However, that does NOT change the definition God has established, which is the only true marriage in God's eyes. A marriage that will remain exclusive, a permanent union of a man and a woman; even as our Supreme Court and state legislatures deliberately defy this reality.

God's design for marriage is far more breathtaking, and much more satisfying than anything we could *ever* create on our own.

We have much more reason to be confident in the strength of marriage, as God has defined it. After all, it has been around since the beginning of time.

- Gen. 2:24 – God instituted *monogamous marriage*.

Like all divine institutions, it was established for man's good and cannot be violated with impunity. "Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."

- Gen. 2:25 - Sinless and unbroken, Adam and Eve had a beautiful innocence about them. They were naked and not ashamed. The implication that *shame* would come due to the fall, but Adam and Eve didn't have it.
- Matt. 19:1-12 -In these verses; Jesus affirms the foundational reality of marriage in the fabric of God's creation. Marriage will be around at the end of time. Surely it won't look the same as it does today, for this earthly shadow will one day give way to its eternal substance.
- On that day, Christ will be united completely with His Church, and all of Heaven will shout! (Rev. 19:6-7,9.)
- Yet, based on Rev. 19:9 "true words of Gods," – we need not worry about whether marriage is going to make it – We do not look to any court or government to define marriage. God has already done that, and His definition cannot be eradicated by a vote of legislators, or opinions of the Supreme Court.

People's effort to justify *same-sex marriage* behavior does not change GOD'S TRUTH. However, the most important law is that you treat everybody the way you want anyone to treat you.