

Created for
Oneness

A BIBLICAL FRAMEWORK FOR
MARRIAGE AND SEXUALITY



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CHAPTER ONE

God's Design and Desire for Marriage



Marriage is God's idea. He is the Architect and Designer of this foundational relationship that unites a man and a woman and forms the basic building blocks of culture. Together a man and woman can do what they can never do alone. In fact, being alone was the very first problem God addressed.

The story of creation is recorded in the first two chapters of Genesis. Throughout the account, everything that God made was good. However, as he looked over his magnificent creation, God saw something that did not meet his approval. God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."⁵

So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." That is why a man leaves his father and mother

⁵ Genesis 2:21-25

and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh. Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame. Genesis 2:21-25

God took “one of the man’s ribs.” A better translation of this verse is, “He took from his side” or “He took part of his side.” God did not create the woman from the dust as he did the man. He did not make a new and different species. Everything he invested in the man was now invested in the woman.

The word “made” is the Hebrew word *banah*. It means “to build” or “structure.” From the man God built the woman, and God built the woman’s body in a way that complemented and completed the man.

We need to teach our children that our bodies are unique gifts from God! This is essential in a day when “perfectly” formed models dominate our children’s smartphone screens, and those same smartphones deliver degrading images of the body through pornography. In her book *Real Sex*, Lauren Winner says,

Bodies are not simply pieces of furniture to decorate or display; they are not trappings about which we have conflicted feelings . . . they are not objects to be dieted away, made to conform to popular standards, or made to perform unthinkable athletic feats with the help of drugs; they are neither tools for scoring points nor burdens to overcome.⁶

When God created the woman, he created a “suitable helper.” The word “helper” is in no way a demeaning description.

⁶ Lauren Winner, *Real Sex: The Naked Truth about Chastity*, Brazos Press: Grand Rapids, MI, 2005. 33-34.

The same word is used to refer to God himself.⁷ It describes one who provides what is lacking, one who completes and one who brings healing. The Septuagint⁸ used the Greek word for “physician” to translate “helper.” Just as a physician prescribes the right medication and provides the right procedure, so the woman brings the remedy for man’s aloneness.

God’s desire in creating the woman was to complete the man. The woman was a “suitable helper.” The word “suitable” means “counterpart.” The man and woman were made to complement each other. Each had what the other needed physically, emotionally and spiritually. Together, the man and woman could honor, serve, and reveal God’s Person in a way they could not do alone.

After God provided the man and woman for each other, he put forth general instructions for their relationship. This teaching is found in Genesis, repeated by Christ in the Gospels and by Paul in his letter to the Ephesians. God said the man and woman are to leave their parents, be united to each other, and enjoy a one-flesh relationship. Let’s break down the three specifics of this foundational passage about marriage.

Leaving Mom and Dad

The man and woman are to leave their mom and dad, who brought them into the world, nourished, and raised them. While the married couple will still love, care for, and enjoy their

⁷ Exodus 18:4; Deuteronomy 33:7; 1 Samuel 7:12; Psalms 20:2, 46:1

⁸ The Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament

parents, a new relationship is started. The core loyalty is no longer to parents, their tradition, or influence. Each couple must set their own course with their allegiance being to each other.

This is why a husband or wife should never discuss the issues of marriage with their parents. Likewise, parents should never engage in discussion of this type. Parents, you are partial. You will always take sides. Many couples struggle because the man and/or the woman have not left mom and dad.

When my son, Garrison, married his beautiful wife, Sarah, I had the great privilege of officiating the ceremony. During the message I told them never to go to Sarah's parents or us with marriage issues. I encouraged them to find a counselor or marriage mentor when inevitable problems arose. I said, "Sarah, don't go to your parents. They will always be partial to you. And Garrison, don't come to Mom and me. We will always be partial to Sarah." Parents cannot referee their children's marriage issues!

United to Each Other

The man and woman are to be united to each other. The word *united* is used to describe "permanence." It means to stick to something—to grasp something and not let go. In Scripture, it is used to describe the skin clinging to the bones.⁹ It is used to describe a warrior who has fought so long and hard that his hand is frozen to his weapon.¹⁰ In the New Testament, Jesus places this permanence on the divine level. He says, "What

⁹ Psalm 102:5

¹⁰ 2 Samuel 23:10

God has joined together, let man not separate.”¹¹

Marriage is to be a covenant that rules over time, emotions, joys, and sorrows. It’s a commitment that lasts through riches or poverty, health or sickness, good times or bad. Life will have its inevitable challenges. Jesus said that the married man and woman must not separate what God has joined together.

Oneness

The man is to leave his father and mother, be united to his wife, and together they will become one flesh. The married man and woman experience an intercourse of body, mind, and spirit. Aristotle described this oneness as “a single soul dwelling in two bodies.” This one-flesh relationship encompasses four areas.

- ***Spiritual Oneness:*** The husband and wife need to be on the same spiritual page. Believers are to marry only other believers.¹² They must grow together in their love for Christ.
- ***Physical Oneness:*** The husband and wife must have an exclusive intimate relationship with each other. All other options for intimacy are off the table.
- ***Emotional Oneness:*** The couple must commit to exclusive feelings for each other. All other options for emotional attachments, past or present, cannot be in play.¹³

¹¹ Mark 10:9

¹² 2 Corinthians 6:14

¹³ Social media has become a threat to many marriages. Be careful with your Facebook friends.

- **Oneness of Mission:** The man and woman must be headed in the same direction at the same time for the same reasons.

In Scripture, God gives instructions for this one-flesh relationship. Scripture explains that the man is to be the servant-leader of the new home.¹⁴ After his relationship with the Lord, his first responsibility is always to his wife. He must love her, not only in words but in every deed, willing to give his very life for her.¹⁵ He must nourish his wife, providing her with all she needs emotionally, physically, and spiritually. He must encourage and support his wife's spiritual growth.¹⁶ This means he must be growing spiritually as well. He must cherish his wife as a prized treasure from the heavenly Father and must always be faithful to her. The writer to the Hebrews looks each man straight in the eyes and says, "The marriage bed must be undefiled."¹⁷

The wife's task is laid out in Scripture as well. She must place herself under her husband's leadership just as she places herself under the leadership of the Lord.¹⁸ She is to love her husband and demonstrate it by her words and actions. She is to be faithful to him and respect him as the one the sovereign God has chosen for her.¹⁹ The wife, too, must develop as a follower of Jesus Christ.

¹⁴ Ephesians 5:23

¹⁵ Ephesians 5:25

¹⁶ Ephesians 5:26-27

¹⁷ Hebrews 13:4

¹⁸ Ephesians 5:22

¹⁹ Ephesians 5:33

“Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labor in vain.”²⁰ A wise husband and wife are committed to having God as the Architect and Builder of their home. God’s design for marriage is for one man and one woman to commit themselves to each other for life.

What causes us to stray from God’s design? What are current things in our culture that threaten God’s blueprint? Let’s start with the big one, the big *D*—divorce.

²⁰ Psalm 127:1