

Marriage: God's Portrait of the Gospel
God's Purpose and Design for Marriage

Scripture Reading

Genesis 2:18 – 25

18 Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." 19 Now out of the ground the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. 20 The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. 21 So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. 22 And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. 23 Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." 24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. 25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

Purpose: Every Christ follower who is married must seek to glorify God in their relationship and reflect the Gospel of Christ in how they behave to a watching world.

Introduction: God created three institutions. He created Marriage and Family, the governments and the church. For the next three Sundays, we are going to look at marriage and on March 5th, we will talk about children and parenting. This is after all supposedly the month of love since Valentine's Day is on Tuesday. Here is a video reminder.

Don't Be a Jerry Video

- This and the following sermons are reminder sermons, sermons to check your relationship with your spouse and family and make adjustments to continue to build up the relationships whether you are a mom, dad and a child in the family.
- We will be giving you resources to share with your culture that you intersect with and impact about what the Bible says about marriage, the true priorities of a marriage a relationship, improving your communication skills and more.
- I want to say right up front, contrary to our culture, that God gives us the rights as explained in the opening of the Constitution and it God, not the government who sanctions marriage
- The Respect to Marriage Act passed Congress in a bipartisan way and was signed into law on December 13th, 2022 codifying the Obergefell decision in

2015 giving same sex couples the right to marry anyone in the United States as federally mandated.

- **The Respect for Marriage Act threatens religious freedom and the institution of marriage in multiple ways:**
- **It further embeds a false definition of marriage in the American legal fabric.**
- **It jeopardizes the tax-exempt status of nonprofits that exercise their belief that marriage is the union of one man and one woman.**
- **It could make religious freedom and free speech cases harder to win.**
- **It could result in predatory litigation by activists against faith-based social-service organizations that could mire Americans in courts for years to vindicate their rights under the First Amendment.**
- **The truth is the Respect for Marriage Act does nothing to change the status of same-sex marriage or the benefits afforded to same-sex couples following Obergefell. It does much, however, to endanger religious freedom. - Source – Alliance Defending Freedom**
- **So today, we remind you of our stand on marriage here at PVBC based on the Word of God that marriage is that holy covenant, recognized by God and His church, which is reserved for a man and woman only, to be wedded, and they are to remain faithful in their commitment and intimate relationship until death due them part.**
 - Despite what the world says and other Christians who try to justify same sex marriage or any kind of marriage that is unbiblical, this is what the Word of God teaches, period, on this subject. Let's be very clear as we move on to talk about God's design for marriage. He designed it for a beautiful purpose and for maximum fulfillment of joy between a man and woman.
 - I do believe there are some who God calls to be celibate in this life. Marriage is not for every person or every Christian. I don't want to short change any of you who are not married or did not remarry after a divorce or the death of a spouse. God has a clear plan and purpose for your life as laid out in I Corinthians 7 as Paul makes an appeal for celibacy to be able to exclusively focus on God and His work with less distraction that married life and a family can bring.

Transition: But marriage is a blessed thing and God has a plan and purpose in His design for marriage so let's look at three purposes for marriage this morning.

Marriage is designed by God for a man and woman to mutually complete one another - Genesis 2:18-25

- **Marriage fulfills the need for companionship**

- Animals weren't enough for Adam. He named all the animals but he was still lonely. The animals were not the same as another human being.
- Men and women were created with the need for relationship; relationship with God and relationships with other human beings
- I know that things have changed in how people meet, date and get married today. The internet and COVID have changed the way people socially interact, but there are still some stages that people go through that leads them to get married. It is a process and sometimes a heart breaking, painful process in the dating stage. But God has a purpose for each of these stages to prepare a couple for marriage and maturity in the marriage.
- **Dating / Courtship / Arranged Marriages – Spirit – Friendship / Companionship- Grow together spiritually**
- **Engagement – Soul – Common Goals / Common Values – share future plans and a deepening of emotional attachment. Grow together emotionally**
- **Marriage – Body – Sexual Union – Consummation of the Spirit and Soul – Grow together in intimacy**

- **Dating – Spirit**

- **Engagement – Soul**

- **Marriage – Body – Sexual Union**

- **The world's view of how to approach this and redefine love is just the opposite of what God intended - Slide.**
- Your husband or wife should be your best friend. You should be honest and transparent with your spouse about everything
 - Social media / passwords
 - Finances – one checking account
 - Some share the same email address and that shows even more honesty and accountability.
- **Marriage provides a depth of wholeness to the husband and wife – Ephesians 5:21 - 33**
 - You learn not be selfish
 - You learn how to live with someone else and share
 - You learn humility
 - You learn responsibility
 - You learn how to serve one another with mutual love and respect

Illustration: One husband said that when he and his wife were engaged, they agreed that the husband would take care of the big decisions and the wife would

take care of the small decisions. The husband said all we have had are small decisions in our marriage.

- You learn conflict resolution and forgiveness
 - Divorce is not an option
- You grow together more spiritually because of the relationship.
- The world has all of their priorities out of order and their focus and perspective is all wrong. The world makes us curious and makes us think that we are missing out on all the fun and happiness if we are monogamous in our intimate relationships.

Matthew 6:33

33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you

Psalm 16:11

You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy ;at your right hand are pleasures forevermore

Hebrews 10:35

Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward

- We need to ponder the superiority of God as our great reward over all that the world has to offer. If we don't, we will love the world like everyone else and live like everyone else.
- God's treasure that is lasting for all time is much better than the short-lived happiness the world seeks in this world. They are never fulfilled so they are on to the next person or next thing to get their new rush of happiness.
- Finding our pleasure in God is better than sex. Jesus never had sexual relations, and he was the most full and complete human that ever will exist. Sex is a shadow — an image — of a greater reality, of a relationship and a pleasure that will make the most exquisite sex seem like a yawn.
- Don't get me wrong, God created sex for ultimate pleasure within the confines of marriage but the way our world is becoming more and more focused on sexual things, they are missing out on the one who can fill all of our desires with joy and satisfaction by doing things in God's way and His time.

Application: God designed marriage for the maximum fulfillment and benefit for the husband and wife in a death do you part relationship.

Transition: Stay committed and building your relationship with your spouse if you are married.

Marriage is designed by God to multiply a godly legacy – Genesis 1:28a; Psalm 127:3-5; Psalm 78:5 – 7; Ephesians 6:1 – 4; Proverbs 22:6

Genesis 1:28a

And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth

Psalm 127: 3 – 5

3 Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward. 4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. 5 Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate

Illustration: Lily Jones Howard grew up in a church in southern California with a burgeoning children's and youth ministry. The church held afternoon and evening AWANA clubs and ran separate junior high and high school youth groups. She compares that to the church she and her husband and two children attend now. The median age of members, she guesses, is about 65 or 70. “The pastor has said explicitly that children are the lifeblood of the church,” Howard said. The congregation makes an effort to welcome young families like hers.

In the near future, an increasing number of American evangelicals may find themselves with church experiences like the Howard family's for one principal reason: evangelicals with children are slowly becoming harder to find.

Americans in general are having fewer children today than they did two generations ago. Spiking after World War II, the fertility rate declined to around two lifetime births per woman in the '80s and has hovered there since, according to the Pew Research Center.

Evangelicals also weigh seemingly conflicting concerns. Some see God's command in Genesis to “be fruitful and multiply” as paramount, while others glean from the creation story a responsibility to steward creation, which might mean having fewer children.

- Children are taught how to come to Christ and grow in Him by developing godly character
 - There is no substitute for a mom and dad who are committed to Christ, committed to each other and committed to the spiritual growth of the family.
 - The church is a compliment to the family's spiritual growth with dad being the head of the household and expected to lead in the spiritual growth of his wife and kids. The church is NOT to be considered a substitute for the home developing Christ followers and disciple makers in the home.

- There are so many amazing resources out there for your time of devotions with your family. “God’s Creation Family Devotions” by Rick McGough

- Children are taught how to find their purpose in life within a biblical worldview

- More things are caught than taught in your kids lives.
- Let them catch you as moms and dads reading the Bible, praying, praying together as a spouse, serving in the church
- Let them see you have honesty in your relationships and business dealings
- Be intentional to answer the why questions kids have.
- Make sure your kids have their own faith and not that of the parents. That can be a difficult thing to discern. Ask them what they are learning in Awana, in Chaos Student Ministry times.
- Help them develop a reading plan in the Bible at their age.
- Pray at meals together and give the kids turns in praying.

Illustration: Chris, my grandson, showed me where he is reading in his Bible, Will, Harrison sharing verses they have memorized at their Awana clubs.

- Read to your kids and grandkids, bedtime stories of biographies of great Christian people from yesteryear. Tell them about the heroes of the faith.

- Children are taught to become fishers of men

- It is important to instill in them at an early age a few things
 - The habit of going to church and why you go to church
 - Tithing
 - Daily reading God’s Word for themselves as they get to the place where they can do that. Buy them an appropriate Bible for that.
 - Sharing their faith with others. They are more honest as a child and as we get older, we begin to care many times too much what people may say if we share our faith. Developing in them an understanding that evangelism is a lifestyle

- Children are taught to pass the faith and the Gospel on to succeeding generations

- When we as parent and grandparents model these things, kids realize that this is what they are supposed to be doing when they grow up and get married as well.
- Kids are so impressionable and teachable. May we be intentional in growing godly families to affect generations to come with the Gospel in our families!!

Illustration: Every father leaves a legacy with his children—no exceptions. The only question is, what kind of legacy? A few years ago, a team of New York state

sociologists attempted to calculate the influence of a father's life on his children and the following generations. In this study, they researched two men who lived in the 18th century. One was Max Jukes, the other Jonathan Edwards. The legacy that each of these men left their descendants stands as a study in contrasts; they are as different as night and day.

Max Jukes was an unbeliever, a man with no principles. His wife also lived and died in unbelief. What kind of a lasting influence did he leave his family? Among the 1,200 known descendants of Max Jukes were:

- 440 lives of outright debauchery (excessive indulgence in sensual pleasures)**
- 310 paupers and vagrants**
- 190 public prostitutes**
- 130 convicted criminals**
- 100 alcoholics**
- 60 habitual thieves**
- 55 victims of impurity**
- 7 murderers**

Research shows that not one of Jukes' descendants made a significant contribution to society—not one! To the contrary, this notorious family collectively cost the state of New York \$1,200,000.00. Not much of a legacy.

What about the family of Jonathan Edwards? Regarded as the most brilliant mind America has ever produced, Edwards was a noted pastor and astute theologian. This renowned scholar was the instrument God used to bring about the Great Awakening in colonial America. Later, he served as the president of Princeton College. Jonathan Edwards came from a godly heritage and married Sarah, a woman of great faith. Together, they sought to leave an entirely different legacy. Among his male descendants were:

- 300 pastors, missionaries, or theological professors**
- 120 college professors**
- 110 lawyers**
- 60 physicians**
- 60 authors of good books**
- 30 judges**
- 14 presidents of universities**
- numerous giants in American industry**
- 3 U.S. congressmen**
- 1 vice-president of the United States**

There is scarcely any great American industry that has not had one of Jonathan Edwards descendants as its chief promoter. Such is the lasting influence of a godly man. Now that's a legacy!

Application: God designed marriage to be the greenhouse that grows godly families.

Transition: Another reason God designed marriage that is very important is that;

Marriage is designed by God to mirror God's image – Genesis 1:26 – 27

- Marriage was created with the purpose to glorify God as a couple – Ephesians 2:10; I Corinthians 10:31; Ephesians 1:11-12

Ephesians 2:10

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Ephesians 1:11 – 12

11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, 12 so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory

- The things you can do as a couple to point people to Jesus are endless.
- Just pulling out of your driveway on Sunday mornings over and over again, speaks volume to your neighbors.
- Welcoming new neighbors to the neighborhood by taking them cookies and introducing yourself
- Sharing tools with your neighbors and inviting them in for a meal.
- Be an active member of your Home Association
- Attend funerals of your neighbors
- The list is endless. Just how you conduct yourself and live out Christ and look for ways to pray for and minister to your neighbors is a big deal. Don't underestimate a simple act of kindness.
- Marriage was created to reflect the intimacy of God with man – Ephesians 5:21 – 33; Hebrews 13:4
 - One flesh – Genesis 2:24; I Corinthians 6:15 – 20 – **Slide of Michelangelo's picture of God reaching to man**

Genesis 2:24

24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh

I Corinthians 6:15 – 20

15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! 16 Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two will become one flesh." 17 But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. 18 Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin

a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. 19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

Quote: “We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, or use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God.” – Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Policy for PVBC from the Bible

- Christians and the world have degraded the beauty of sex inside of marriage. We have cheapened it and we, as Christ followers, need to speak up about intimacy in the marriage relation in a positive way. The advantages of staying faithful to your spouse are exponential.
- Pornography is big business and so is sex trafficking in the United States
 - ✓ Most kids today are exposed to porn by age 13,1 with 84.4% of males and 57% of females ages 14-18 having viewed porn. - Wright, P. J., Paul, B., & Herbenick, D. (2021). Preliminary insights from a U.S. probability sample on adolescents' pornography exposure, media psychology, and sexual aggression.
 - ✓ Pornography damages your brain like cocaine does
 - ✓ It creates heartache in the marriage and to me, my opinion it is adultery.
 - ✓ Pornography leads to the growing sex trafficking issues in our country. Consider this: every two minutes, a child is bought and sold for sex in the United States
 - ✓ Hundreds of young girls and boys—some as young as 9 years old—are being bought and sold for sex, as many as 20 times per day.
- **One heart- Ecclesiastes 4:9-10**
 - A man, a woman needs that marriage relationship to stay strong and weather the storms and influences of this world that swirl around all of us.

Ecclesiastes 4:9 – 10

9 Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. 10 For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up!

- That is why sharing and communicating with your spouse is so important.
- We are a lonely society and having a companion to share life with, to share a home with is so important post – COVID
- To be connected with one heart and going in the same directions is vital to a healthy and godly relationship

- One vision – Hebrews 12:2; Amos 3:3

Amos 3:3

“Do two walk together, unless they have agreed to meet?”

- Having the same priorities in spending
 - Having good discussions about where to go on vacation
 - Having a plan for your kids and grandkids, how to invest and spend time with them with intentionality
 - Making decisions on future plans together.
 - Being there through bad health and difficulties. Agreeing and going in the same direction. The art of compromise and flexibility in the marriage relationship is so valuable.
 - Lastly, but very important;
- Marriage is a portrait of the Gospel and our becoming united with Christ – Romans 6:3 – 5; John 17:20-23

Romans 6:3 – 5

3 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his

- You and your spouse are both one in Christ and you and your spouse are also in God’s eyes one flesh.
- By how we treat our spouse, it reflects the Gospel of Christ.
- The intimacy and depth of love for one another is huge.
- We need to celebrate lengthy marriages and that will encourage others to work on their marriage and grow deeper in love with their spouse as the years go by.

Illustration: Immanuel Baptist Church – honor those who were married 50 years. – plague and recognition in church service.

- We reflect the love we have for Christ by how we treat our spouses
 - Intimacy and love of the Trinity for one another – we are a picture of that.
- Joy in our relationship – joy we have in Christ
- Faithfulness, working through difficult times, reconciling,

- All of these things in more can cause people to ask a reason for the hope that is in you.

I Peter 2:12

Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

Application: God designed marriage to be an example of the Gospel lived out for all to see!

Key Thought: Every Christ follower who is married must seek to glorify God in their relationship and reflect the Gospel of Christ in how they behave to a watching world.

Questions to Ponder this Week

1. Is your love for Christ growing so your love for your spouse can continue to grow?
2. Are you building into your kids a faith that they can claim as their own?
3. What are you doing, practically speaking, as a couple that reflects to others your commitment to Christ?