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What god plan for marriage

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground... The LORD God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.’...For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. Genesis 1:26-28, 2:18, 24 In this session, we will consider God’s plan for marriage as primarily seen in the Genesis narrative. Most married couples miss God’s best simply because they do not know what God desires for marriage. If you don’t know the purpose of something, it is destined for misuse. Therefore, over 50% of marriages end in divorce, and a large number of those who remain married continue to miss God’s purpose for their union. Today, we will help move your marriage or future marriage in the direction God desires through studying his Word. In this session, we will consider five aspects of God’s plan for marriage. God’s Plan for Marriage Is to Reflect His Image Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. Genesis 1:26-27 The Bible teaches Adam and Eve, as husband and wife, were created in the image of God and, therefore, were meant to bear God’s image—to be in his likeness. Marriage was meant to model and display God’s glory to all of creation. In what ways is the image of God reflected in the marriage union? We see his image is in the plurality and unity of marriage. God said, “Let us make man in our image,” and then the text says, “male and female, he created them” (v. 26, 27). When God made man, he made a plurality. He made man and woman, and later in the narrative, he said they would become “one flesh” (Gen 2:24). The Trinity is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit; they are one and yet still individual persons. When a couple gets married, they are meant to demonstrate this. Marriage demonstrates two individual people becoming “one” for the rest of their lives while maintaining their individuality. With that said, there are other Trinitarian implications to the marriage union. In the Trinity, Jesus the Son submits in all things to God the Father (cf. John 5:19, 1 Cor 15:27) and the Holy Spirit submits to both (cf. John 14:26, 15:26). There is perfect submission in the Godhead. In the same way, when God made man and woman in his image, there was meant to be order in the relationship. First Corinthians 11:3 says: “Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.” Paul says in the same way that the head of Christ is God, so the head of the woman (better translated wife) is man. God made the husband and wife relationship to mirror the Godhead specifically in the area of authority. Therefore, Ephesians 5:24 calls for wives to submit to their husbands in everything. Another Trinitarian implication is love in marriage. The wife submits to the husband and the husband loves his wife. Consider Ephesians 5:25-27: Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. The submission of the wife happens in a perfect loving relationship with her husband. Similarly, throughout eternity, the Godhead has always dwelled in a perfect relationship of love and authority. The Father loves the Son and the Son submits to the Father. The Father does not oppress the Son and make him submit. He loves the Son, and within this perfect love, the Son submits to God. The Holy Spirit loves and submits to both. In fact, 1 John 4:8 simply says, “God is love.” In the same way, wives are called to submit to their husbands, and husbands are called to love their wives. It is not that the wife does not love her husband or that the husband never submits to his wife (cf. Eph 5:21). It’s just that the defining characteristic of the woman’s service to her husband should be submission, and the defining characteristic of the husband’s service to his wife should be love. This is part of the way we see the image of God in the marriage relationship. Ephesians 5:25 gives us a picture of what the husband’s love should look like. It should reflect Christ. The husband is called to love his wife as Christ loved the church. How did Christ love the church? He died for her, and he also teaches her the Word of God. The husband must love his wife sacrificially and lead his wife spiritually. When the world looks at a Christian marriage, they should see a husband who makes daily sacrifices for his wife and actively leads the home spiritually. He leads his family in the church, he leads family devotions. He serves his wife and edifies her with his words. He sacrifices to please her and build her up. The wife honors him as her head and submits to him in everything (Col 3:18). This is a redemptive picture of the gospel. Marriage should demonstrate the perfect love and submission in the Godhead. It should also reflect the perfect sacrificial love of Christ for the church and the church’s submission to Christ. People should be encouraged and challenged by watching a godly marriage. They should see something of the glory and the greatness of God. Therefore, when a marriage is not functioning correctly, it displays a marred image of God and distorts its intended message. With so many marriages ending in divorce or continuing in disarray, the glory of God has been greatly dimmed. It is no surprise that so many people doubt God’s existence or are falling away from him. The light in marriages has often become darkness, which in turn pushes people away from God. In marriage, it should be our desire to reflect God and bring glory to him since that was his original plan. God Plan’s for Marriage Is to Raise Godly Children God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Genesis 1:28 At one point, raising children was considered the pinnacle of marriage and revered by all. However, many now see children as a burden and the ultimate kill-joy for a married couple and sometimes even for society. One of the key differences between angels and mankind is the fact that God made man to procreate, to create new beings as he did. When a couple relinquishes the prospect of having children for job, hobbies, freedom, etc., they are missing out on one of the grandest and most awesome desires of God for marriage. This is further supported by what God said through the prophet Malachi: Has not the LORD made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth. Malachi 2:15 This passage clarifies God’s command for people to be fruitful and multiply in Genesis 1:28. It is not just children he wants but godly children. He wants children who are holy and driven to see the kingdom of God advance. One of the parents’ highest purposes is to teach their children the Bible, to help them grow in character, and to help them find their spiritual gifts and calling in serving the Lord. Now, it must be noted that obviously it is not God’s will for everybody to have children. Physical issues keep some from having children. For others, God simply never called for them to marry. However, in general, it has been God’s will from the beginning for man to be fruitful and multiply (Gen 1:28). Having children should be considered as a way of obeying God and building his kingdom. Therefore, we should pray about it and plan for it as we do with any ministry. God’s Plan for Marriage Is to Establish and Build His Kingdom God blessed them and said to them... fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground. Genesis 1:28 After telling Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply, God told them to subdue and rule over the earth. They were to be co-rulers over his creation and to be stewards of it. This is expanded in the New Testament as marriage is described as a spiritual gift given to build up the body of Christ and to advance his kingdom. Consider what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 7:7: Sometimes I wish everyone were single like me—a simpler life in many ways! But celibacy is not for everyone any more than marriage is. God gives the gift of the single life to some, the gift of the married life to others. (The Message) Here Paul taught that marriage is a spiritual gift, just as singleness is. And since all gifts are given to build up God’s body and his kingdom (cf. 1 Cor 12:7), a godly marriage is a powerful weapon for the kingdom of God. They build the kingdom through raising godly seed, corporate prayer, service to God’s church, and evangelism of the world. Certainly, each couple will have unique gifts and a unique way God has called them to build his kingdom. One couple may excel in worship, another in teaching, another in hospitality, another in missions, etc. Each couple must discern the way God has uniquely called them to build his kingdom. How is God calling you and your mate to uniquely build his kingdom? God’s Plan for Marriage Is Companionship The LORD God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.’ Genesis 2:18 God has put an innate desire in mankind for intimate companionship. This is why so many single people, though they have family and friends, covet something more and often have bouts of loneliness. God made man to be married to a woman and woman to a man. Certainly some in the world have the gift of singleness, a very special gift given to allow for a deeper devotion to God and his work (cf. 1 Cor 7:32). The gift of singleness is a gift that needs to be restored to the church, as singles have accomplished some of the greatest work for God’s kingdom (i.e. Jesus and Paul). But, with that said, this gift is not for everyone. God wants most people to have a mate: someone to fellowship with, to dream with, to serve with, and to be heirs of life together with. It is a beautiful experience and a great gift. Solomon gave several reasons that companionship is good. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 says: Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken. Though these apply to any companionship, they most definitely apply to marriage. He said that two are better than one because of the productivity of their work. Many couples have seen themselves more productive in finishing school, working in business, growing in the Lord, doing ministry, etc., because of the marriage union. God desires to increase one’s productivity through marriage. Solomon also said that a companion is helpful when one falls down because a friend can help him up. Life has many ups, downs, discouragements, trials, and even mountain-top experiences. However, many times there are more downs than ups. When a marriage is working properly, it will help navigate the trials and discouragements of life. A good spouse will speak words of encouragement and faith to her mate, enabling him to get up when he has fallen down. She will make him strong when he is weak and vice versa. Sadly, marriages that are not functioning properly will actually wear one another down instead of building one another up. Be careful to never speak words of discouragement over your spouse. Decide to always speak gracious words over their lives to edify them, even when you don’t feel like it or you feel like they don’t deserve it. Ephesians 4:29 says, “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.” Do you practice speaking words of faith and encouragement over your mate to help build them up? Marriage also has many other practical benefits such as keeping oneself warm and providing for daily needs, but one of the greatest benefits is protection. Solomon said two can defend themselves (Ecc 4:12). This is especially important in a Christian marriage because of the attacks of the enemy in spiritual warfare. Satan realizes the tremendous potential in every marriage, and consequently, he always attacks them. Expect warfare in marriage. Satan will do everything he can to keep a couple out of the Word of God, out of prayer, away from commitment to the church, and fighting with one another. He does this because he realizes that two people unified and on fire for the kingdom of God can do incrementally more than one. Therefore, it is important for couples to use their spiritual weapons to protect one another. These weapons are praying over one another daily, consistent Bible reading, speaking the Word of God over one another, commitment in serving the body of Christ, and having accountability with other Christians. Have you given thought to the increased warfare that will happen in the marriage union? Many find themselves overpowered in marriage for lack of understanding the nature of their new warfare. God’s Plan for Marriage Is for a Couple to Make a New Family Unit For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. Genesis 2:24 After God made a woman for Adam, he said that a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife. This means that in marriage, a couple is starting a new family unit. This does not mean that they are no longer their parents’ children, but it does mean that the priorities of a man and woman have changed. Their priority must now be their marriage. This is very important because one of the top reasons for divorce is in-laws. The wife battles between submitting to her parents’ expectations and that of her husband, and it’s the same for the husband. Every time the couple fights, the husband’s mom or the wife’s father has something to say. Married couples must be very careful of this. They are always called to honor their parents and even care for them in old age (1 Tim 5:4, 8), but they must honor their spouse first. The fact that a man is called to leave his father’s house also implies that he must be able to support himself and his new wife financially. It implies independence. Young couples who are still dependent upon their parents financially often invite unnecessary tension in their marriage. The parents’ financial support typically comes with a certain amount of control or expectations that can be detrimental to their marriage. Couples who are ready to get married should consider whether they are financially prepared to get married. They should consider if they are ready to leave their families and cleave to their mate and also if they are ready to make their mate their primary focus after God. Conclusion In conclusion, it important to remember the reasons God created marriage, because if we forget them, the marriage relationship is destined for abuse. Instead of building God’s kingdom, raising godly children, or providing companionship, couples neglect these pursuits for other things which ultimately cripple their marriage. Let us always remember God’s plans for the marriage union so that we can honor them and fulfill God’s purposes. God’s plan for marriage is to reflect his image. God’s plan for marriage is to raise godly children. God’s plan for marriage is to establish and build his kingdom. God’s plan for marriage is companionship. God’s plan for marriage is for married couples to make a new family unit. God’s Plan for Marriage Homework Answer the questions, then discuss together. 1. What was new or stood out to you in this session? In what ways were you challenged or encouraged? Were there any points/thoughts that you did not agree with? 2. Why do you want to marry this person? Give five reasons other than love. 3. If marriage is a spiritual gift meant to advance the kingdom of God, evaluate yourself and your spiritual gifts. How has God uniquely gifted you to build up his church (teaching, encouraging, serving, helping, mercy, etc.)? If you are not sure, ask your mate or friends what they would consider your spiritual gifts to be. 4. What are your mate’s spiritual gifts? How do you see God using your mate to build the kingdom of God, serve the church, etc.? How can you help him/her in that pursuit? 5. Solomon discussed some of the benefits of companionship that we find in marriage such as: being productive in work, helping when the other stumbles, and protecting one another. What are your common pitfalls or circumstances where you find yourself prone to discouragement or sin? What are the triggers to those pitfalls (problems with career, family, depression, worry, spiritual life, etc.)? How do you navigate these trials and what role can your spouse play to help you out? 6. The weapons we use in spiritual warfare and the trials of life are primarily spiritual. Discuss your spiritual disciplines (prayer, reading the Word, accountability, fasting, church attendance, service, etc.) and how you implement them daily/weekly. How do you think your mate is in his/her spiritual disciplines and how can you encourage one another in them so you can more effectively overpower the enemy? 7. God’s desire for most marriages is to be fruitful and multiply, producing godly children. How many children do you want? How many does your mate want? Have you discussed family planning? Will you use contraception? If so, what types? It is important to research this before the wedding as some methods are abortive and therefore immoral. 8. What type of relationship do you have with your parents? Do you foresee your family having any problems with your marriage (i.e. not accepting your spouse, cultural problems, distance, etc.)? 9. What type of relationship do you have with your mate’s parents? In what ways do you think you could better minister to or get to know your mate’s parents in order to honor them (cf. Eph 6:2)? 10. Do you foresee any problems in your marriage with putting the union first over one’s parents? Explain. 11. Do your parents or your mate’s parents have any serious sicknesses? God’s call on couples is to care for their parents in old age (1 Tim 5:4, 8). Have you and your mate discussed the possibility of caring for parents in old age? How would you handle this? Share any thoughts or concerns. 12. After completing this session, in what ways do you feel God is calling you to pray for your future marriage? Spend some time praying.

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