

The Nature of Marriage

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Divine Provision

Marriage is God's provision for human happiness (Genesis 2:18-24; Proverbs 18:22; 19:14).

Genesis 2:18-24 ... 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. (NASB95)

Proverbs 18:22 ... 22 He who finds a wife finds a good thing And obtains favor from the Lord. (NASB95)

Proverbs 19:14 ... 14 House and wealth are an inheritance from fathers, But a prudent wife is from the Lord. (NASB95)

Exclusive Privileges

Marriage provides exclusive privileges (Proverbs 5:15-23; 1 Corinthians 7:1-5; Hebrews 13:4).

Proverbs 5:15-23 ... 15 Drink water from your own cistern And fresh water from your own well. 16 Should your springs be dispersed abroad, Streams of water in the streets? 17 Let them be yours alone And not for strangers with you. 18 Let your fountain be blessed, And rejoice in the wife of your youth. 19 As a loving hind and a graceful doe, Let her breasts satisfy you at all times; Be exhilarated always with her love. 20 For why should you, my son, be exhilarated with an adulteress And embrace the bosom of a foreigner? 21 For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the Lord, And He watches all his paths. 22 His own iniquities will capture the wicked, And he will be held with the cords of his sin. 23 He will die for lack of instruction, And in the greatness of his folly he will go astray. (NASB95)

1 Corinthians 7:1-5 ... 1 Now concerning the things about which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman. 2 But because of immoralities, each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband. 3 The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. 4 The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. 5 Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. (NASB95)

Hebrews 13:4 ... 4 Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge. (NASB95)

Mutual Responsibilities

Marriage requires mutual responsibilities (Ephesians 5:22-32; Colossians 3:18-19; 1 Peter 3:1-7).

Ephesians 5:22-32 ... 22 Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. 24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, 26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. 28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; 29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, 30 because we are members of His body. 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. (NASB95)

Colossians 3:18-19 ... 18 Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. 19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them. (NASB95)

1 Peter 3:1-7 ... 1 In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, 2 as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. 3 Your adornment must not be merely external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; 4 but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. 5 For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; 6 just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear. 7 You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered. (NASB95)

Sacred Covenant

Marriage is a sacred, three-fold covenant between a man, a woman and their God (Malachi 2:13-16; Proverbs 2:16-19; Matthew 19:3-9).

Malachi 2:13-16 ... 13 “This is another thing you do: you cover the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping and with groaning, because He no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand. 14 “Yet you say, ‘For what reason?’ Because the Lord has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. 15 “But not one has done so who has a remnant of the Spirit. And what did that one do while he was seeking a godly offspring? Take heed then to your spirit, and let no one deal treacherously against the wife of your youth. 16 “For I hate divorce,” says the Lord, the God of Israel, “and him who covers his garment with wrong,” says the Lord of hosts. “So take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously.” (NASB95)

Proverbs 2:16-19 ... 16 To deliver you from the strange woman, From the adulteress who flatters with her words; 17 That leaves the companion of her youth And forgets the covenant of her God; 18 For her house sinks down to death And her tracks lead to the dead; 19 None who go to her return again, Nor do they reach the paths of life. (NASB95)

Matthew 19:3-9 ... 3 Some Pharisees came to Jesus, testing Him and asking, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all?” 4 And He answered and said, “Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, 5 and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? 6 “So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.” 7 They said to Him, “Why then did Moses command to give her a certificate of divorce and send her away?” 8 He said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way. 9 “And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.” (NASB95)

Temporal Relationship

Marriage is a temporal and earthly relationship, not an eternal and heavenly one (Ecclesiastes 9:2-10; Matthew 22:23-33; Mark 12:18-27; Luke 20:27-40).

Ecclesiastes 9:2-10 ... 2 It is the same for all. There is one fate for the righteous and for the wicked; for the good, for the clean and for the unclean; for the man who offers a sacrifice and for the one who does not sacrifice. As the good man is, so is the sinner; as the swearer is, so is the one who is afraid to swear. 3 This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that there is one fate for all men. Furthermore, the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil and insanity is in their hearts throughout their lives. Afterwards they go to the dead. 4 For whoever is joined with all the living, there is hope; surely a live dog is better than a dead lion. 5 For the living know they will die; but the dead do not know anything, nor have they any longer a reward, for their memory is forgotten. 6 Indeed

their love, their hate and their zeal have already perished, and they will no longer have a share in all that is done under the sun. 7 Go then, eat your bread in happiness and drink your wine with a cheerful heart; for God has already approved your works. 8 Let your clothes be white all the time, and let not oil be lacking on your head. 9 Enjoy life with the woman whom you love all the days of your fleeting life which He has given to you under the sun; for this is your reward in life and in your toil in which you have labored under the sun. 10 Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might; for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol where you are going. (NASB95)

Matthew 22:23-33 ... 23 On that day some Sadducees (who say there is no resurrection) came to Jesus and questioned Him, 24 asking, "Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies having no children, his brother as next of kin shall marry his wife, and raise up children for his brother.' 25 "Now there were seven brothers with us; and the first married and died, and having no children left his wife to his brother; 26 so also the second, and the third, down to the seventh. 27 "Last of all, the woman died. 28 "In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had married her." 29 But Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures nor the power of God. 30 "For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. 31 "But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God: 32 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of the dead but of the living." 33 When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at His teaching. (NASB95)

Mark 12:18-27 ... 18 Some Sadducees (who say that there is no resurrection) came to Jesus, and began questioning Him, saying, 19 "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves behind a wife and leaves no child, his brother should marry the wife and raise up children to his brother. 20 "There were seven brothers; and the first took a wife, and died leaving no children. 21 "The second one married her, and died leaving behind no children; and the third likewise; 22 and so all seven left no children. Last of all the woman died also. 23 "In the resurrection, when they rise again, which one's wife will she be? For all seven had married her." 24 Jesus said to them, "Is this not the reason you are mistaken, that you do not understand the Scriptures or the power of God? 25 "For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. 26 "But regarding the fact that the dead rise again, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the burning bush, how God spoke to him, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? 27 "He is not the God of the dead, but of the living; you are greatly mistaken." (NASB95)

Luke 20:27-40 ... 27 Now there came to Him some of the Sadducees (who say that there is no resurrection), 28 and they questioned Him, saying, "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies, having a wife, and he is childless, his brother should marry the wife and raise up children to his brother. 29 "Now there were seven brothers; and the first took a wife and died childless; 30 and the second 31 and the third married her; and in the same way all seven died, leaving no children. 32 "Finally the woman died also. 33 "In the resurrection therefore, which one's wife will she be? For all seven had married her." 34 Jesus said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, 35

but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; 36 for they cannot even die anymore, because they are like angels, and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. 37 “But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the passage about the burning bush, where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. 38 “Now He is not the God of the dead but of the living; for all live to Him.” 39 Some of the scribes answered and said, “Teacher, You have spoken well.” 40 For they did not have courage to question Him any longer about anything. (NASB95)

Spiritual Foundation

Happiness in marriage is rooted in maintaining a proper relationship with God (Psalm 128:1-6; cf. also 127:1-5).

Psalm 128:1-6 ... 1 A Song of Ascents. How blessed is everyone who fears the Lord, Who walks in His ways. 2 When you shall eat of the fruit of your hands, You will be happy and it will be well with you. 3 Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine Within your house, Your children like olive plants Around your table. 4 Behold, for thus shall the man be blessed Who fears the Lord. 5 The Lord bless you from Zion, And may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life. 6 Indeed, may you see your children’s children. Peace be upon Israel! (NASB95)

Psalm 127:1-5 ... 1 A Song of Ascents, of Solomon. Unless the Lord builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the Lord guards the city, The watchman keeps awake in vain. 2 It is vain for you to rise up early, To retire late, To eat the bread of painful labors; For He gives to His beloved even in his sleep. 3 Behold, children are a gift of the Lord, The fruit of the womb is a reward. 4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one’s youth. 5 How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them; They will not be ashamed When they speak with their enemies in the gate. (NASB95)

Recognize the value of character (Genesis 6:1-9; Proverbs 12:4; 14:1; 31:10-31).

Genesis 6:1-9 ... 1 Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, 2 that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose. 3 Then the Lord said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.” 4 The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown. 5 Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 The Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. 7 The Lord said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them.” 8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. 9 These are the records of the

generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God. (NASB95)

Proverbs 12:4 ... 4 An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, But she who shames him is like rotteness in his bones. (NASB95)

Proverbs 14:1 ... 1 The wise woman builds her house, But the foolish tears it down with her own hands. (NASB95)

Proverbs 31:10-31 ... 10 An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels. 11 The heart of her husband trusts in her, And he will have no lack of gain. 12 She does him good and not evil All the days of her life. 13 She looks for wool and flax And works with her hands in delight. 14 She is like merchant ships; She brings her food from afar. 15 She rises also while it is still night And gives food to her household And portions to her maidens. 16 She considers a field and buys it; From her earnings she plants a vineyard. 17 She girds herself with strength And makes her arms strong. 18 She senses that her gain is good; Her lamp does not go out at night. 19 She stretches out her hands to the distaff, And her hands grasp the spindle. 20 She extends her hand to the poor, And she stretches out her hands to the needy. 21 She is not afraid of the snow for her household, For all her household are clothed with scarlet. 22 She makes coverings for herself; Her clothing is fine linen and purple. 23 Her husband is known in the gates, When he sits among the elders of the land. 24 She makes linen garments and sells them, And supplies belts to the tradesmen. 25 Strength and dignity are her clothing, And she smiles at the future. 26 She opens her mouth in wisdom, And the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. 27 She looks well to the ways of her household, And does not eat the bread of idleness. 28 Her children rise up and bless her; Her husband also, and he praises her, saying: 29 “Many daughters have done nobly, But you excel them all.” 30 Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, But a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised. 31 Give her the product of her hands, And let her works praise her in the gates. (NASB95)

Realize the importance of temperament (Proverbs 19:13; 21:9, 19; 27:15-16).

Proverbs 19:13 ... 13 A foolish son is destruction to his father, And the contentions of a wife are a constant dripping. (NASB95)

Proverbs 21:9 ... 9 It is better to live in a corner of a roof Than in a house shared with a contentious woman. (NASB95)

Proverbs 21:19 ... 19 It is better to live in a desert land Than with a contentious and vexing woman. (NASB95)

Proverbs 27:15-16 ... 15 A constant dripping on a day of steady rain And a contentious woman are alike; 16 He who would restrain her restrains the wind, And grasps oil with his right hand. (NASB95)