



The Purpose of Marriage by Geoff Horrell

When we think of getting married, this thought of idealism comes to our mind, "If I get married, I'll be happy until the end of my days."

You can get caught up in a whirlwind of emotions and fail to work out some crucial issues before you commit your lives to each other. We will look at 3 basic purposes for getting married, from the scriptures.

Purpose Number One

In the second chapter of Genesis we pick up the creation story after God has created man: "Then the Lord God said, It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable from him" (Genesis 2:18).

Up to this point in creation, God had said everything was good. Yet here, by God's own declaration, we see that something is not good. In fact, God declared that Adam's singleness was the opposite of good.

God's solution for Adam's need was to "make him a helper suitable for him." It's important here to note that "helper" does not mean "servant." On the contrary, in the day when Moses penned these words, to identify a woman as a helper was counter to the culture's common low view of women. He actually elevated the sense of a woman's worth and role by calling her by the same name used to describe God Himself in other places of the Old Testament (see Psalm 30:10 and 54:4). To be called a "helper" here speaks more to the simple fact that God had plans for Adam that he could not fulfil without a mate - he was incomplete. Adam needed Eve.

Also notice that this passage does not imply that every married person is incomplete without a mate. All of us are created in the image of God and bring glory to God when we yield ourselves to His purpose and plan for our lives. Jesus, after all, was single. However, in God's timing He does sovereignly choose to bring a husband and wife together for them to accomplish together what they couldn't have accomplished separately.

When God calls you to marry, He gives you a mate who, by divine design, will complete you. Together you will be stronger and more effective than if you remain single. Most happily married couples could point to specific examples of how God has fit them together.

For example:

- The husband is people - oriented, and his wife is task-oriented (or vice versa). He helps her relate socially to others while she keeps him focused on task they need to complete.
- He races through life at a fast pace, while her inner clock impels her to move much slower. He helps her make it on time to meetings while she helps him stop and smell the roses.

In His wisdom God brings two people together to balance each other out, to fill each other's gaps. They are stronger as a team than they were as individuals. They are two independent people who choose to become interdependent.

Purpose Number Two

As we continue looking at the book of Genesis, we find the second purpose of marriage: "And God blessed them; and God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth" (Genesis 1:28).

This passage makes it clear that, according to God's design for marriage, having children is not an option, but a command. What do you think God had in mind when He made bearing children such a priority?

What do the following passages from Psalms tell us about God's opinion of children and why they are important to Him? "Behold, children are a gift of the Lord; the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them; they shall not be ashamed, when they speak with their enemies in the gate" (Psalm 127:3-5). "For He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers, that they should teach them to their children, that the generation to come might know, even the children yet to be born, that they may arise and tell them to their children, that they should put their confidence in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments" (Psalm 78-5-7).

Not only is having children a reward and a blessing (see Psalm 127:3-5), but it also has an essential part in God's plan to pass on His Word to the next generation. Although not every couple is able to have biological children of their own, it is God's intent for every couple to be ministering into the next generation - passing on their faith in God so the

next generation can in turn pass it on to the next. Psalm 78 makes it clear that the family is one of the best environments in which this can happen.

God's original plan called for the home to be a "greenhouse" - a nurturing center where children grow up to learn character, values and integrity. In no other setting does a child learn more about how to live and how to relate to God than in a family.

Purpose Number Three

Consider God's purpose in creating humans: "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." And 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 third purpose for marriage - that God created us to mirror His image - is a critical foundation for understanding God's design. It means that God chose to reveal to us a part of His character and being through our relationships.

For example, when we love one another we reflect God who created love and relationships. When we forgive each other, we reflect Him who for gave us in Christ (see Ephesians 4:32).

Why is this important? Because God created us to know Him and to live within the context of His plan for our lives. When a man and woman come together in a marriage with God at the center of their relationship, they will reflect His image. The world will see in that relationship a representation of who God is and how He loves.

Mysteriously, God chose to use a husband and wife to represent, or mirror, Him to humankind. It is through this marriage relationship that a couple can demonstrate a portion of God's love, forgiveness and long- suffering commitment to people.

Summary

Marriage is far more than a cultural institution or an arrangement for a man and woman to meet their needs for companionship. As we consider the purposes of marriage we find the answers in the authoritative best - seller of all time, the Bible. All three of these purposes for marriage point us back to the spiritual originator of marriage - God. As Psalm 127:1 tells us, "Unless the Lord builds the house, they labour in vain who build it." That means marriage is far more important than you may have thought. There is more at stake in your marriage than just two people trying to meet one another's needs. God's reputation - His image - is at stake in your marriage. To build a marriage according to God's design, you cannot ignore the spiritual foundation.