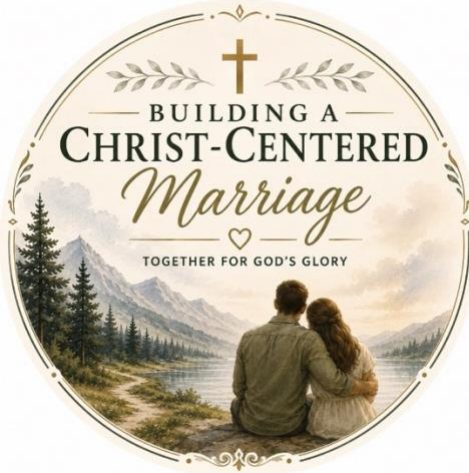




GOD'S DESIGN FOR MARRIAGE

LESSON ONE

Part A

BUILDING A CHRIST CENTERED MARRIAGE

Ten Biblical Lessons for Growing Together in Love, Faith, and Unity

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| 1. God's Design for Marriage (A, B, C) | 6. God's Gift of Physical Intimacy |
| 2. Love, Respect, Biblical Leadership | 7. Making Decisions Together |
| 3. Communication That Builds Unity | 8. Money, Work, and Stewardship |
| 4. Healing from Past Hurts, Bitterness, and Unforgiveness | 9. Protecting Your Marriage |
| 5. Growing Spiritually Together | 10. Growing Old Together and Leaving a Godly Legacy |

LESSON OVERVIEW

Marriage did not begin with people, churches, governments, or cultures. Marriage began with God. Before there were nations, communities, or church buildings, God brought one man and one woman together.

God created Adam and placed him in the Garden of Eden. Adam had meaningful work, plenty of food, and fellowship with God. Yet God saw something that was not good. Adam was alone.

God said, *"I will make him an help meet for him."* God then created Eve and brought her to Adam.

- In doing this, God established the first marriage.

Eve was not created to be Adam's property or servant. She was created to stand beside him as his companion and helper. Adam was not created to control, mistreat, or ignore Eve. They were created to live in unity, love, faithfulness, and obedience to God.

Sin later entered the world and damaged every part of human life. Marriage was affected by selfishness, pride, blame, anger, bitterness, lust, dishonesty, and a desire for control.

- However, sin did not change God's original design.

A Christ-centered marriage is not a perfect marriage. It is a marriage in which both husband and wife are learning to follow Christ. They are learning to obey His Word, confess their failures, forgive one another, and grow together.

Many people enter marriage with expectations based on what they saw while growing up.

God created marriage, so God has the right to define it. A husband and wife must learn to ask, "What does God say?" instead of only asking, "What have we always thought marriage was about?"

IN THIS LESSON, WE WILL STUDY THE FOLLOWING TRUTHS:

PART 1: Marriage was created by God.

PART 2: A husband and wife become one.

PART 3: Marriage is a lifelong covenant before God.

KEY VERSE: (Genesis 2:24) *Therefore, shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.*

MAIN SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Genesis 2:18-24

18 And the LORD God said that **it is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.**

19 And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.

20 And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but **for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.**

21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;

22 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and **brought her unto the man.**

23 And Adam said that 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 Therefore shall a man **LEAVE** his father and his mother and shall **CLEAVE** unto his wife: and they shall be **ONE** flesh.

PART 1: MARRIAGE WAS CREATED BY GOD

1. The first marriage took place in the Garden of Eden.
2. Adam did not create marriage or decide what marriage should be.
3. God created the woman and brought her to the man.
4. Because God created marriage, He has the right to tell us how it should work.
5. Human ideas, feelings, customs, and traditions must never be placed above God's Word.
6. God designed marriage to include companionship, help, love, faithfulness, unity, and shared responsibility.

GOD SAW ADAM'S NEED

Genesis 1:27–28

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; **male and female created he THEM.** ²⁸ And **God blessed THEM**, and **God said unto THEM**, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.

- After God created Adam, He placed him in the Garden of Eden. Adam had work to do, food to eat, and a perfect relationship with God. Yet God said that something was not good. Adam was alone.

Practical Illustration: More Than Sharing a House

John and Mary had been married for fifteen years. They worked hard, raised their children, and went to church every Sunday. From the outside, their marriage looked strong.

Most of their talks were about work, bills, meals, and the children. John did not tell Mary that he was worried about money. Mary did not tell John that she felt lonely and tired. They lived in the same house, but their hearts were growing far apart.

One evening, they sat together after the children went to bed. John asked Mary, "How are you doing in your heart?" For the first time in a long while, they talked about their

fears, burdens, hopes, and prayers. They listened without blaming each other. Then they prayed together.

John and Mary learned that companionship means more than sharing a house and doing chores. It means sharing what is happening in the heart. A close marriage grows when a husband and wife make time to listen, care, pray, and enjoy being together.

GOD CREATED A SUITABLE HELPER

Genesis 2:18

And the LORD God said, **it is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.**

- God said He would make Adam “an help meet for him.” The words “help meet” mean a helper who was suited for him. Eve was not an afterthought. She was part of God’s plan. She had the same value before God, although she was created with a different role.

Practical Illustration: Working Together

Daniel and Sarah were planning where to plant their garden. Daniel chose a large piece of ground near the barn. It looked like a good place because it received plenty of sunlight.

Sarah reminded him that water often stood there after a heavy rain. She suggested planting the garden on higher ground. Daniel could have ignored her because he had already made up his mind. Instead, he listened to her concern.

Together, they walked over the land and chose a better place. Daniel prepared the soil, while Sarah planned where to plant each kind of seed. They both worked in the garden, and God gave them a good harvest.

Sarah was Daniel’s helper, but that did not mean she was less important or less wise. Daniel needed her knowledge, and Sarah needed his strength and experience. Their different abilities helped them make a wiser choice.

In the same way, a husband and wife should value each other’s thoughts and abilities. God did not give them differences so they would fight. He gave them differences so they could help, strengthen, and balance one another.

GOD BROUGHT THE WOMAN TO THE MAN

Genesis 2:21–22

And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; ²² And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and **brought her unto the man.**

- Genesis tells us that God brought Eve to Adam. God personally established the first marriage. Marriage existed before sin entered the world. It was part of God's good creation.

Practical Illustration: When Plans Are Different

Peter planned to spend Saturday repairing the barn. His wife, Anna, planned to visit her sick mother. Neither one had talked about their plans.

When Saturday morning came, Peter expected Anna to help him. Anna expected Peter to take her to her mother's house. They both became upset. Each one thought the other person was being selfish.

After speaking unkindly, they stopped and talked about what had happened. They saw that both of them had been thinking mostly about their own plans. They asked each other for forgiveness and prayed for the Lord's help.

Together, they made a new plan. They worked on the barn in the morning and visited Anna's mother in the afternoon. Both had to give up part of what they wanted.

Marriage showed Peter and Anna the selfishness in their hearts. It also gave them a chance to practice love, patience, sacrifice, forgiveness, and service. When Christ is at the center, marriage becomes more than a search for happiness. It becomes one of the ways God teaches us to love like Jesus.

GOD'S WORD IS ABOVE HUMAN TRADITION

Matthew 19:4–6

And he answered and **said unto THEM**, have ye not read, that **he which made THEM** at the beginning **made THEM male and female**, ⁵ And said, **for this cause shall a man leave father and mother**, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? ⁶ Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. **What therefore God hath joined together**, let not man put asunder.

- Every family and community has traditions. Some traditions are harmless, and some are helpful. Other traditions may work against the Word of God. A couple may believe that the husband should never listen to his wife. Another couple may believe the wife should control

every detail of the home. Some may believe that feelings should never be discussed. Others may believe that a husband or wife must remain silent about serious problems.

Practical Illustration: Testing Tradition by God's Word

Levi grew up believing that a husband should make every choice without asking his wife. Rebecca was taught that a good wife should remain silent, even when she saw a serious problem.

One day, Levi wanted to borrow a large amount of money for a new piece of equipment. Rebecca cared for the family records. She could see that the monthly payment would place the family under great pressure, but she was afraid to speak.

Levi noticed that Rebecca was troubled. Instead of ignoring her, he asked her to share her concerns. They prayed, looked at their records, and talked honestly. After listening to Rebecca, Levi saw the danger. Together, they decided to wait.

Levi learned that godly leadership does not mean refusing to listen. Rebecca learned that respecting her husband does not mean hiding a serious concern.

Their family tradition had taught them one thing, but God's Word taught them to listen, seek wisdom, speak truth, and care for one another. They chose to place Scripture above tradition.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Your marriage belongs to God. It should not be guided only by personal wants, family customs, or community expectations.

Ask yourself whether you treat your husband or wife as a gift from God. Do you value your spouse's thoughts and concerns? Do you make time to listen? Do you work together, or do you compete against one another?

Marriage should be a place of companionship instead of loneliness, help instead of competition, and love instead of control.

A husband and wife should not ask only, "What can I get from this marriage?" They should also ask, "How can our marriage honor God?"

DISCUSSION AND SELF-EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1. What beliefs about marriage did you learn from your family or community, and do those beliefs agree with Scripture?
2. Do you treat your husband or wife as a trusted companion, or mostly as someone who should meet your needs?
3. What burden, fear, or struggle do you need to share more honestly with your husband or wife?
4. What is one change you can make so your marriage more clearly follows God's design?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for creating marriage. Thank You for my spouse and for the life You have given us together. Thank You for giving us Your Word to guide our marriage and our home.

Help me place Your Word above my feelings, ideas, customs, and traditions. Show me where my thinking or actions do not agree with Your truth. Give me a humble heart that is willing to listen, learn, and change.

Help me value my spouse. Teach me to listen with care, speak with kindness, and notice the burdens they carry. Help us share our joys, fears, struggles, hopes, and plans with each other.

Please forgive me for the times I have been selfish, proud, impatient, or unkind. Help me see my own sins instead of only seeing the faults of my spouse. Give me courage to admit when I am wrong and ask for forgiveness.

Please heal the hurts in our marriage. Help us forgive each other as You have forgiven us. Restore trust where it has been broken and help us grow closer to You and to each other.

Help our marriage show the love and faithfulness of Christ. May our home be filled with peace, truth, prayer, and love. Help us set a godly example for our children and for those around us.

Lord Jesus, please be the center of my heart and our marriage. Help us build our home upon Your Word and follow Your plan each day.

In Jesus' name, Amen.