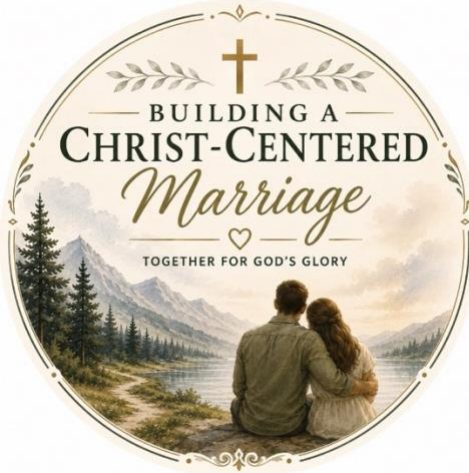




GOD'S DESIGN FOR MARRIAGE

LESSON ONE

Part B

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

When Adam saw Eve, he understood that she was different from every animal God had created. She was like him. She was made from him and was suited to stand beside him.

Adam said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh." His words described closeness, belonging, and unity.

God then explained that a man would leave his father and mother, cleave to his wife, and become one flesh with her.

These three words describe God's plan for marriage: leave, cleave, and become one.

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 2: A HUSBAND AND WIFE BECOME ONE

1. When Adam saw Eve, he knew that she was different from every animal God had created.
2. Eve was like Adam. She was made from him and was created to stand beside him.
3. Adam said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh."
4. God said that a man should leave his father and mother.
5. The husband and wife should become one flesh.
6. Three words describe God's plan for marriage: leave, cleave, and become one.

A MARRIED COUPLE MUST LEAVE

Genesis 2:23–24

And Adam 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 Therefore shall a man **leave his father and his mother**, and shall **cleave unto his wife**: and they shall be one flesh.

- Leaving does not mean that a husband and wife stop loving, honoring, or caring for their parents. Scripture teaches us to honor our father and mother. Leaving means that marriage creates a new family relationship. The husband and wife become responsible to build their own home together.

Practical Illustration: Building Their Own Home

Eli and Rachel had been married for two years. They lived in their own house, but their parents were still involved in many of their choices.

Whenever Eli and Rachel disagreed, Eli talked to his father. His father usually agreed with him. Rachel talked to her mother, who usually agreed with her. Before long, a small disagreement between Eli and Rachel became a problem between both families.

An older Christian couple spoke with them. They explained that honoring parents does not mean allowing parents to control the marriage. Eli and Rachel needed to talk, pray, and make choices together.

Eli stopped asking his father to take his side against Rachel. Rachel stopped sharing every private disagreement with her mother. They still asked their parents for counsel when needed, but they made the final choice together.

Eli and Rachel learned that leaving does not mean rejecting their parents. It means protecting their marriage, setting proper limits, and building their own home together. Their parents remained important, but their marriage became their closest human relationship.

A HUSBAND AND WIFE MUST CLEAVE

Mark 10:7–9

For this cause shall a man **leave his father and mother**, and **cleave to his wife**; ⁸ And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. ⁹ **What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.**

- The word “cleave” means to hold tightly, remain joined, and stay faithful. Marriage is not meant to be temporary or disposable. A husband and wife promise to remain together through changing circumstances.

Practical Illustration: Guarding What Belongs to Marriage

Caleb and Ruth went through a hard season. Money was tight, and they often argued about bills. They stopped talking about their hearts and began to feel far apart.

Caleb started sharing his worries with another woman. At first, the talks seemed harmless. Soon, he was telling her things that he was not telling Ruth. He began looking forward to those private talks and hiding them from his wife.

Caleb realized that this secret friendship was weakening his marriage. He ended the private conversations and told Ruth the truth. His confession hurt her, but it opened the door for honesty and healing.

Caleb and Ruth asked a mature Christian couple for help. They began praying together, talking honestly about money, and making choices as a team. Trust did not return at once, but they kept working to rebuild it.

Cleaving did not mean pretending that nothing was wrong. It meant facing the problem with truth, repentance, wise help, and faithfulness. They chose to protect their marriage and give their deepest loyalty to each other.

Cleaving means refusing to give up when life becomes hard. It also means guarding the heart from any relationship that could take the place that belongs to a husband or wife. It never means hiding abuse, violence, or dangerous behavior.

A HUSBAND AND WIFE BECOME ONE FLESH

Ephesians 5:28–31

So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. ²⁹ For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: ³⁰ For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. ³¹ For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

- Becoming one flesh includes physical intimacy, but it means more than the physical relationship. A husband and wife begin to share life. They share a home, responsibilities, money, decisions, joys, disappointments, and plans for the future.

Practical Illustration: Carrying the Load Together

Jonas and Leah needed to move a heavy cupboard from one room to another. Jonas stood at one end, and Leah stood at the other.

At first, they did not agree on which way to turn. Jonas pulled one way while Leah pulled the other way. The cupboard did not move, and they both became upset.

They stopped and talked about what they needed to do. They agreed on the direction, counted together, and moved one step at a time. Jonas could not see what was behind him, so Leah guided him. When Leah began to lose her grip, Jonas stopped and helped her.

Jonas and Leah were two different people standing in different places, but they were working toward the same goal. Each person saw something the other could not see. Each one needed the other.

Marriage works in much the same way. A husband and wife do not need to think exactly alike, but they must learn to walk in the same direction. They should listen, help, and care about what affects the other person.

Marriage should not become a struggle to see who wins. When a husband and wife work against each other, both lose. When they seek God's will and carry life's burdens together, their marriage grows stronger.

UNITY MUST BE BUILT

1 Corinthians 7:3–5

Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise, also the wife unto the husband.

⁴ **The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband:** and likewise, also **the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.** ⁵ Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency (lack of self-control).

- A couple becomes one before God when they marry, but practical unity must be built over time. Unity grows through honest conversation, patience, forgiveness, prayer, affection, trust, and time together.

Practical Illustration: Peaceful on the Outside

Isaac and Miriam rarely argued. Other people thought they had a peaceful marriage. However, they avoided every subject that might cause disagreement.

Isaac was worried about money, but he did not tell Miriam. Miriam felt hurt by some of Isaac's words, but she remained silent. Both carried secret disappointment. Their home was quiet, but their hearts were growing far apart.

One evening, they agreed to talk honestly. They promised not to attack, threaten, or walk away. Isaac shared his worries about money. Miriam explained how his words had hurt her.

At first, the conversation was uncomfortable. They both had to listen without trying to defend themselves. Isaac admitted that he had spoken harshly. Miriam admitted that she had allowed bitterness to grow. They asked each other for forgiveness.

One honest talk did not fix every problem, but it was a beginning. They continued talking and praying together each week.

Isaac and Miriam learned that unity is not built by avoiding hard subjects. It is built through truth, patience, listening, confession, forgiveness, prayer, and time. A quiet home is not always a united home. True unity grows when two people open their hearts and face problems together.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Ask yourself whether your actions are building unity or creating distance.

Do you speak openly with your spouse? Do you make important decisions together? Do you protect your marriage from outside interference? Do you keep secrets?

A husband and wife should be able to say, "We are on the same side."

Unity does not happen automatically. It must be protected and strengthened.

Set aside time to talk without interruption. Listen without preparing your answer. Ask questions instead of making accusations.

Do not allow pride to keep you from saying, "I was wrong. Please forgive me."

DISCUSSION AND SELF-EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1. Have parents, relatives, friends, or other people been allowed to interfere too much in your marriage?
2. What does cleaving to your spouse look like when you are disappointed, hurt, or angry?
3. Is there an area of your life, such as money, feelings, decisions, or relationships, that you have kept separate from your spouse?
4. What practical step can you take this week to strengthen unity in your marriage?