

Love and Marriage Were God's Ideas

Rev 19:6-9

6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

I. Introduction

1. Next Sunday in the U.S. is a tribute to love, a day to honor our mate, spouse, boyfriend, girlfriend, or fiancé with expressions of love and romance.
2. And stories about romantic love make you go, “aww.” Romance is the subject of so many great stories.
3. From the loving words expressed on Hallmark cards or Hallmark movies, love draws a guy and a girl together with the impression that loving relationships are all smiles, chill bumps, and butterflies in the stomach.
4. And for many of us, that is how our relationship started, but making and sustaining a godly relationship requires much more than smiles, chill bumps, and butterflies.
5. The foundation of relationships is found in the Bible, from Genesis all the way through Revelation. A lot of direction is provided including a definition of marriage and the setting of boundaries that both make it special and protect it from violation.
6. Many long-lasting marriages of upwards of 60-70 years have shown by example that relationships guided by the scriptures have worked for thousands of years. So while the idea has come open for review and redefinition in our lifetimes, I want to declare with boldness that **[slide] marriage does not need redefinition, but rediscovery**. That is the purpose of today's and next Sunday's message—to rediscover something beautiful.
7. It is a worrisome question to consider, but I wonder how many of our beliefs and lifestyle choices have been re-shaped by our culture that are actually contrary to the Word of God? Not only in the area of marriage, but even more generally in our attitudes about morality, godliness, righteousness, and even what is right and what is wrong?
8. When a people veer away from a shared set of moral standards, it does not take long for morality standards to be governed by the ever-changing outcomes of the latest opinion poll.
9. So back to the subject at hand. Regardless of bad press that the Bible has gotten through the years, it is like honesty—it is the best policy.

II. Foundations of love and marriage

A. Love

1. One of Jesus' apostles who was very close to Jesus had a good understanding of love.
2. In the gospel he wrote, instead of referring to himself by his name, John, four times he referred to himself as “the disciple whom Jesus loved.”

3. It was John who wrote one of the most quoted phrases in the Bible:
*1 John 4:8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for **God is love.***
 4. Two powerful truths are stated there: **“If you don’t have love you don’t know God.”**
 5. And, **“God is love.”**
 6. He restates that strong connection between God and love later in the same letter:
*1 John 4:16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. **God is love;** and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*
 7. Since God is the origin of love, we can also look to how God so loved the world as an example of what love should look like:
John 15:13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.
 8. No doubt many of you have heard of the Greek word that is translated as “love” in this verse--*agape*, which is the highest form of love—it is a love that has as its basis giving.
 9. In this context, then, [slide] **love is a choice that governs our commitment to give ourselves to and to serve another.**
 10. The idea of “falling out of love” is one of those ideas that has arisen out of our culture that bases relationships not on what we give, but what we get.
 11. To some, they think that once that other person no longer gives them what they want, or no longer generates goosebumps and butterflies (which sounds more like a disease), they “fall out of love.”
 12. To them, great love is the feeling the other person gives them.
 13. But the God who is love, defined the standard for great love, as being willing to lay down your life for them.
- B. The love standard in marriage
1. And that is the high standard set for love between a husband and wife:
Eph 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;
 2. And wives are also to learn what it means to show this kind of love to their husbands:
*Titus 2:4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, **to love their husbands,** to love their children,*
 3. Jesus taught about love being sacrificial, and we know that He not only talked the talk, but He walked the walk when He gave His life for the church.
 4. There is no better way to understand what love is than to get the opinion of the One whose very substance is love, and who authored love.
 5. So practically speaking, husbands, this is a way to pray about your marriage: “Lord, how can I give myself for my wife today to demonstrate my love to her.”
 6. And wives, this is a way to pray for your marriage: “Lord, help me to learn to love my husband in such a way that he knows he is loved.”
 7. True love is always on a path of discovery.
- C. Corresponding opposite
1. We’ve given a very brief definition of the high form of love that God asks in a marriage. Now let us look at the definition and purpose of marriage provided by the Author of love.
 2. Let us go to the book of beginnings, the Book of Genesis. Shortly after creation when we read several times, “And God said, let there be...”

3. After forming man of the dust of the earth, God said:
Gen 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.
 4. The phrase, “help meet” means, “a helper who corresponds” to him. Like how a glove corresponds to the hand. Like how two adjacent puzzle pieces correspond to one another. Like how two gears working in tandem and correspond with one another.
 5. A literal translation of the Hebrew word translated “meet” in the KJV, is “according to the opposite of him.” Our mate is a corresponding opposite.
 6. They come together well because they are opposites that attract.
 7. And then God took a piece from Adam’s side, a rib, and formed a woman so that man said of her, “this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.” (Gen 2:22-23)
- D. Definition of marriage
1. After creating the woman, God gave us the earliest definition of marriage from God in the book of beginnings:
Gen 2:24-25
24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.
25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.
 2. In that definition of marriage, we see one male and one female.
 3. We see them separating from their parents—a provision for future generations—forming an independent union.
 4. The couple will cleave, unite, join together as one flesh.
 5. They were naked together without shame before God’s presence.
 6. The principles of marriage found in these verses were established from the beginning and are still good for today.
 7. It cannot be more clear that marriage was God’s idea and He set the parameters for marriage in the first book of the Bible.
 8. A union based on love between a man and a woman, the attraction of opposites to help supply something missing in their mate, a separation from others to form a sacred union, and a sexual intimacy sanctioned by God.
 9. Intimacy is sanctioned by God and honorable among all within marriage:
Hebrews 3:4 Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.
 10. But notice how sexual intimacy outside of marriage is adultery that God will judge. Another translation puts it this way:
Heb 13:4 Marriage must be honored among all and the marriage bed kept undefiled, for God will judge sexually immoral people and adulterers. NET
 11. We already read how the husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it.
 12. Another passage says he is to love her as he loves his own body. And yet another says, he is to dwell with her according to knowledge, meaning he is challenged to keep studying and learning her.
 13. And we read how the wife is to learn to love her husband (and her children—and children are to honor their parents), meaning love is an ongoing process of study and learning and keeping it fresh.

- E. Summary
- 1. Love was designed and defined by God who set the example of how His idea of sacrificial love fits into a relationship.
- 2. Marriage was also designed and defined by God and includes a commitment of exclusivity and intimacy to one another that is blessed by God.
- 3. And like many other things established by God, cultures that discount the authority of the Bible, find it necessary to redefine what God has already defined.
- 4. And it puzzles us how people who decide to hold to the scripture's definitions of these age-old institutions like love, marriage and family, are defined as haters.
- 5. I guess it should not surprise us if they redefine such long-regarded definitions like marriage, that they would also redefine "hate."
- 6. But I want to assure anyone who is paying attention, that loving God and loving His Word, does not mean we hate people who believe differently.
- 7. The love of Christ in us means we can love people who disagree with us and even hate us.

III. Marriage is enduring

- A. Jesus restated the marriage definition
- 1. Around 4000 years after God gave these definitions of marriage, the original definition, was still holding.
- 2. Jesus was answering a question about marriage and divorce when He said this:
Matt 19:4-6
4 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.
- 3. All scripture is important, but I always give special attention to the words in red letters since they are Jesus' words.
- 4. When questioned about marriage that had been defined by God, He pointed back to that original, old-fashioned definition that was 4000 years old at that point.
- 5. Jesus quoted the passage we already read in Genesis 2:24, and then added, *What God has joined, let no man separate.*
- 6. In the culture of the first century that Jesus came to, divorce and remarriage was done on a whim, so Jesus reaffirmed that God created the two genders, that marriage was exclusively one man joining one woman, and that the union was made with life-long permanence in mind.
- 7. Jesus did go on to say that because of hard hearts, divorce was permitted in limited situations, but that was not God's original intent.
- 8. So in this time of celebration of love and relationships, rather than focus on cards, roses, and heart-shaped boxes of chocolates, think about giving real, meaningful, and sacrificial expressions of love.
- 9. Cards get thrown away, roses wilt, at least some of the candy gets eaten, the rest of the squished ones get thrown away, and what is left of that expression of love?

10. But a mutual commitment to giving sacrificial love on a daily basis, pursuing a unity that brings you together as one flesh, and honoring and cherishing your mate, that is the stuff of a long-lasting and successful marriage.
 11. Maybe it does not make a Hallmark card or movie, but it makes life satisfying.
- B. Paul restated the marriage definition
1. Just briefly, not only did Jesus restate the original definition of marriage in Genesis 2:24, so did the Apostle Paul.
Eph 5:31-32
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.
32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.
 2. This is important because Paul was writing to instruct the church how relationships should look.
 3. And since we are in the same church, these instructions continue to be definitive for the church. Marriage is honorable.
 4. But verse also leads me to our closing point. There is an eternal parallel seen in the marriage relationship that places it in a category of not temporary and culturally exclusive to the first century.
- IV. Conclusion: marriage in the very end
1. Paul said he was writing about a mystery seen by the relationship between Christ and the church.
 2. That is why he said earlier in that chapter:
Eph 5:25-27
25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;
26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,
27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.
 3. The principles of marriage set forth in the scriptures we read were not intended to be temporary and only locally applicable.
 4. God created marriage a parallel to Jesus Christ giving His life for the church. There is a parallel of Christ being the groom and the church being the bride.
 5. Just as a glorious bride is presented to the groom in the wedding ceremony, so is the glorious church going to be presented to Christ.
 6. I want to invite you to a wedding ceremony. Oh, it will be a wedding to top all weddings.
 7. And it will not be copied from *Bridal Guide* magazine, or *Martha Stewart Weddings*. It is no copy. It is the standard.
 8. Let me read about it. You talk about marriages made in heaven. This is literally a marriage occurring in heaven that will be held at the end of days, just before the start of the Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ:
Rev 19:6-9
6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.
*7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for **the marriage of the Lamb is***

come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

*8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the **righteousness of saints.***

9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

9. So the fact that God placed instructions about marriage in the first book of the Bible, and then placed a wedding in heaven in the last book of the Bible occurring at the end of days, shows us that marriage and love are not temporary ideas to be tampered with and redefined based on popular opinion polls.
10. While some may start calling white black, up down, good evil, and evil good, but those things that God made with eternal significance and duration will remain.
11. Jesus is the groom who wants the deepest of relationships possible with His bride, the church.
12. In case you want to get a look at what the bride will look like in the last days, read about this unity of people that make up the bride:
Rev 7:9-10
9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;
10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.
13. And as a bride, we are called to “make ourselves ready” and be clothed in “fine linen [which is] the righteousness of saints,” to be presented to Jesus as “*a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.*”
14. As a husband or wife, we are called to show the deepest sacrificial love to our mate, and to give our marriage an enduring commitment to closeness, oneness, and unity.
15. As a church, we are called to righteousness, purity, holiness, and removing the wrinkles and blemishes.
16. And one final instruction to the bride of Christ is to do to be busy inviting others to come to Him. :
Rev 22:17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.