

Marriage & the Home

(Adapted from *Path to Righteousness* by Linda Poitras)

“But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one flesh; so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder”
(Mark 10:6-9).

Introduction

We cannot begin a discussion about marriage without first understanding what is involved. Mark 10:6-9 indicates marriage is a joining of one man and one woman by a holy God. This is how God created man and woman in the Garden of Eden – to be the completion of each other. Genesis 2:20-25 tells the complete story of the first marriage. Verse 24 is almost an exact replica of our memory verse: *“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh.”*

Today, the majority of young people (and even older folks) do not really understand what is involved in this idea of “1 + 1 = 1.” Notice this concept does not make room for mothers, fathers, aunts, and uncles. It is just a man and a woman. That is why Jesus said, *“...For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh”* (Matthew 19:5).

People everywhere have taken this serious and binding contract, and made it as meaningless as a piece of paper. God does not look at it so. We would be wise to go back to His original plan for joining two into one. Then, carefully and prayerfully follow His instructions.

To those who are considering marriage, pray for God’s will in the choice of a mate. When repeating the wedding vows, seriously consider what you are promising to each other.

To those already married, remember the solemn vows made before God, the officiating minister, and the congregation. Pray that the Holy Spirit will bring all things to your remembrance. Only physical death should bring separation. It is a vow we must pay (Ecclesiastes 5:4). Remember all those witnesses around you that day? *“God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him”* (Psalm 89:7). Marriage is no joke!

The Purpose of Marriage

Many people have the wrong idea about why they should get married. Some look on marriage as a legal means to satisfy their lust. Others enter into marriage to get children, or to have someone to work and care for them. One lady said, “To give out ‘food money’ is a difficult

experience. I must marry so that the man will shoulder this responsibility.” But does she have any guarantee the he will take on any responsibility? Many times, the wife ends up working harder than ever to support the husband’s education or other desires. On the other hand, the man who chooses a wife simply because he wants someone to cook for him can find himself having much difficulty meeting her demands for this same “food money,” not to mention clothing and adequate housing. What is the correct reason for marriage? What does the Bible have to say on this important subject?

Marriage is union. Marriage is not two people living their own lives under the same roof, doing things to please themselves. It is the union of one man and one woman in the sight of God, becoming one flesh. This is the most sacred of relations ordained by God on earth. It needs to be treasured with love and sincerity. Both partners have to sever all relations and old ties, and please each other in order for this new important step to work. This union is for a lifetime.

Marriage is commitment. We need to remind ourselves of the value of this important word. It means “a continuing obligation, promise, pledge” (*Webster’s Encyclopedic Dictionary*). This is what Jesus meant when He said: “*For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife*” (Mark 10:9). There is a “continuing obligation” to work, grow, and live together until death. The “promise, pledge” of your marriage vows should mean something to you.

The Principles of Marriage

Married people should be easy to identify. It is sometimes difficult to tell which woman in a group is a man’s wife, since he is laughing, joking, and making intimate comments to them all. Women can also have close association with married men, never giving honor to their husbands, as is their due. This is not Scriptural, and will cause much heartache. What does the Scripture say about my actions as a married person?

Marriage is binding. The Pharisees were trying to trick Jesus and get Him to say something that would turn the people against Him. They asked Him if it were okay for a man to put away his wife for any reason. It is in response to this question that Jesus spoke the words of our memory verse.

- 📖 Matthew records it in almost the exact words Mark used: “*And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female. 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? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder*” (Matthew 19:4-6).
- 📖 Paul, in his writings to the church at Corinth, taught this same principle when he said: “*And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband; But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband; and let not the husband put away his wife*” (1 Corinthians 7:10-11).

This principle needs to be considered prayerfully before the marriage contract is ever entered into. We must not think like the world around us that enters into marriage with the notion “if it doesn’t work, I’ll just get a divorce.” Knowing that God’s Word is clear about the duration of marriage would make a difference in the number of broken marriages.

Marriage is until death. Paul spent much time speaking of the state of matrimony to new churches. They were from heathen societies. Their culture and traditions meant they had many questions as to what was right and wrong. He devoted 1 Corinthians 7 to this topic. 1 Corinthians 7:39 gives another principle that makes a lot of difference in a marriage: *“The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.”* Death was the only thing that freed a person from the marriage contract.

Marriage is between only one man and one woman. Another principle that would make a big difference today is that there are no sexual relationships outside of the marriage contract. Husbands and wives do not play around; they remain faithful and true to each other. The writer of Hebrews had some sobering comments to make about this: *“Marriage is honourable in all and the bed undefiled, but fornicators and adulterers God will judge”* (Hebrews 13:4). Some may choose to play around while married, but God will be their ultimate judge. As God’s Word says: *“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God”* (Hebrews 10:31).

Who Should I Marry?

This question has been debated and passed around for centuries. Many times the choice was made according to the financial status of the partner, and even sometimes because of fame or position. All of these are shaky foundations on which to build a lifelong relationship. They will not last. God’s Word gives us the answer we need, and the foundation He gives will never crumble or fall.

Christians should marry only Christians.

- 📖 The first question that comes to mind is “Who is a Christian?” It is anyone who has believed? James tells us that the devils believe. Are they Christians? *“Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well; the devils also believe, and tremble”* (James 2:19). Is it only those who attend my church? God does not look on the outward appearance, but on the heart (1 Samuel 16:7). How do I know someone is a Christian? James 1:19-27. Verse 22 says it best: *“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”*
- 📖 Why is the devil not a true believer? Because he will not obey. You can know for sure that the person you want to marry is a Christian when he has obeyed the gospel, which is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ at work in his life. (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).
- 📖 *“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the*

body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Romans 6:3-6). That is why marrying within your church is encouraged. You can be more sure of what the person has been taught. You also have the opportunity to see what he is practicing in his life.

Christians should follow God's instructions for choosing a partner. God has made a distinction between those who are true believers and those who are not. He tells us repeatedly in His Word, that we should, *"come out from among them and be ye separate"* (1 Corinthians 6:17; Isaiah 52:11; Revelation 18:4).

- 📖 Many people "profess" Christianity, but they do not obey. Be careful to know the type of person you are joining yourself with until death. *"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people"* (2 Corinthians 6:14-16).
- 📖 When you become "one flesh" with another person, you become what he is. *"Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? Know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? For two, saith he, shall be one flesh"* (1 Corinthians 6:15-16). Be very careful and extremely prayerful!

What if I am already married to an unbeliever?

This question is an important one, since many times we come to a saving knowledge of Jesus after we have been married many years. God's Word even has answers for this situation, as He promised to meet our every need.

Should I stay or go? Being married to an unbelieving (disobedient) partner can be a frustrating and trying situation, but do not despair. Paul spoke of this dilemma to the church at Corinth in 1 Corinthians 7:12-16. His advice was to stay with them in the hope that they too would come to know Jesus. *"For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? Or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?"* (1 Corinthians 7:16).

How can I help save my partner? It is an old adage that "actions speak louder than words." Many times preaching will only drive the unsaved loved one further away. But what partner can stand against a godly spirit and submissive attitude in love that is seasoned with much prayer? It may not come in a day or two, but God's Word is true, so it will come. The Apostle Peter wrote of this in his epistles to the New Testament Church in 1 Peter 3:1-7. He was speaking to the saved wife married to an unsaved husband. His teachings are as follows:

- 📖 The woman must submit herself to her husband and recognize his leadership of the family (Ephesians 5:22). This is another reason why women should be careful who they choose to marry, as that person is to become the "head."

- 📖 She must conduct herself in a holy and respectful manner with a gentle and quiet spirit (1 Peter 3:4). Loud preaching and refusing to be a proper “help-meet” will never win the husband.
- 📖 She must endeavor to win her husband more by her behavior than her words. 1 Peter 3:2 says, *“While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.”* The word “conversation” here could have been translated from the original text meaning “conduct” (*Slimline Reference Edition of the Holy Bible – KJV*). Peter was actually telling wives to act correctly and their husbands would notice that God was in control of their lives.
- 📖 A woman in this situation should always live by the Word of God. It should be her comforter and advisor. Her prayer should be asking the Lord Jesus to give her patience and strength to enable her to stand the test. She should always be cautious not to return evil for evil, but to repay evil with good. The “golden rule” would apply here very well: *“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”* (Matthew 7:12).
- 📖 Be careful not to challenge your husband, as this will only bring his wrath on you. Let him know about your church activities, and always take care of his needs before leaving to go to church. If you do not, you will cause him to resent the church and its activities. Remember he has been appointed by God as the “head” of your family, and your arguments to the contrary cannot change this fact (Ephesians 5:22-24).

What if my unsaved loved one is my wife? God’s Word does not deal extensively with this situation, simply because the man is supposed to be the “head” of the home. If he loves his wife properly, she should follow him into a search for knowledge of the deeper things of God. She should also love him enough to submit to his leadership.

However, this is not a license for men to marry outside of the church of God. Men should avoid looking for a partner among unbelievers, or those who have not obeyed the gospel. Your obedience to God’s Word and way is the only guarantee you have of His promises at work in your life and marriage.

Let your attitude, behavior, talk, and walk show the world that you are a mature Christian who is practicing the Word of God. Hide God’s Word in your heart daily so you will be able to live according to the principles laid down by God for His children. This will only be possible with much prayer, fasting, and a steadfast belief that God means what He says. Obedience to God’s Word will bring the promised result of a happy and rewarding marriage.

*“Successful marriage is always a triangle:
A Man, A Woman. . . and God!” – Cecil Myers*

Study Questions

1. What does Mark 10:6-9 indicate about marriage? _____
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2. Explain the concept of "1+1=1." _____

3. List and briefly explain the two (2) reasons the Bible gives for marriage.
1) _____

2) _____

4. List and briefly explain three (3) things the Bible says about my actions as a married person.
1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

5. Explain and give two (2) Scripture references for God's instructions for choosing a marriage partner.
1) _____

2) _____

6. In 1 Peter 3:1-7, the Apostle Peter was speaking to the saved wife married to an unsaved husband. Briefly explain two or three points given by Peter to the churches, with Scripture reference for each. _____

7. Why does God's Word not deal extensively with the situation of an unsaved wife? _____

Additional Notes
