

MARRIAGE

Donald Townsley

Some modern sociologists would lead us to believe that the origin of the institution of marriage cannot be discovered. However, we who are led by faith know that God originated marriage in the beginning when He made man and woman.

MARRIAGE IS OF GOD

The marriage relationship is of divine origin. It began in the mind of God and was established according to His purpose (Gen. 2: 18 - 25). The woman was made as an "help meet" for man (Gen. 2:18). Woman is man's "help meet" in that she is "help suited" to him. She has power to complete his needs physically, intellectually and socially. She is an adequate and a suitable helper for him. She was taken out of man -- bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh (Gen. 2:23). She is the only creature that is suitable for man (Gen. 2:20). She answers to him in bodily form, in flesh, and in rational nature.

God's law of marriage is stated in 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*". This law was not given to Adam alone, but for all married people for all time to come (Matt. 19: 4 - 5). We learn from this law that marriage involves: (1) Purpose -- "*leave and cleave*"; and (2) Union -- "*one flesh*". So, when a man and a woman purpose in heart to be companions for life, meet the requirements of civil law (Rom. 13), and come together in one flesh in the marriage bed (Heb. 13:4), they are married in the sight of God. God joins them together (Matt. 19:6; Rom. 7:2), and He wills that the union in matrimony continue as long as both husband and wife shall live (Matt. 19:8; Gen. 2:24). God has given only one reason for putting away one's companion, and that reason is sexual infidelity -- fornication (Matt. 19:9).

God's plan for man's companionship and happiness makes: (1) bestiality wrong (man with the lower animals -- Gen. 2:20; Lev. 20: 15 - 16); (2) homosexuality wrong (man with man -- Lev. 18:22; Rom. 1: 26 - 27); and (3) fornication wrong -- because the nature of marriage (one man and one woman) excludes fornication and makes it wrong (I Cor. 7; 2; Heb. 13:4). The body of man is not for fornication (I Cor. 6: 13 - 20). Only in marriage does one possess his body in sanctification and honor (I Thess. 4: 3 - 6).

THE PURPOSE OF MARRIAGE AS GOD DESIGNED IT

One of the purposes of marriage is to satisfy man's desire for companionship. God said, "*It is not good that the man should be alone*" (Gen. 2: 18). Man craves companionship, and this craving is fully satisfied in the marriage relationship. When a man takes a woman he loves and enters the marriage relationship, this is the union of two personalities so that they become one flesh. Each finds their own fulfillment in union with the other. The love and companionship created in this relationship will cause almost unbearable loneliness if the husband and wife have to be separated for a long period of time.

God also designed marriage with a biological intent -- to perpetuate the human race. God said to the man and woman when He created them, "*be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth*," (Gen. 1: 28). Paul said, "*I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully*". (I Tim. 5:14). Marriage should never be entered by young people without the purpose of bringing children into the world.

God designed marriage to supply the sexual needs of men and women. Sex is a basic drive of both men and women, and God specified marriage for the fulfillment of that drive. Paul said, "*To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband*" (I Cor. 7:2; Heb. 13:4). Marriage is where one man and one woman come together in love's intimacy. Sex in marriage is to be the total experience of a man and a woman loving each other. Sexual intimacy within marriage can be one of the highest types of male-female communication. God made the sex urge in man and woman constant and strong. He did not limit the urge to a short "mating season" like the lower animals. He had a high and holy purpose for the strength of this urge. It has great positive value in holding a man and woman together in their love and satisfaction in one another. It plays its role in helping create a home for children where there is security and affection. God's plan in making the sex urge constant and strong with its fulfillment in marriage contributes to the permanence and stability of the home. God intended for this strong urge in man and woman to be for their happiness and pleasure (Prov. 5:19), for their good, for the good of their children, and for the good of society. It is good and beautiful when used as God designed it! It is ugly and sinful when fulfilled outside of marriage, and brings unhappiness and untold harm to all concerned! This sexual urge unbridled, and fulfilled outside of marriage, can destroy a society of people (read about Sodom and Gomorrah -- II Pet. 2:6; Gen. 18 - 19). Look at America today! The sex urge that God designed for man's greatest good can work his greatest harm if misused and abused outside of marriage!

THE HONEYMOON

The honeymoon in Old Testament times lasted a year. Deuteronomy 24:5 says, "*When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business: but he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken.*" The honeymoon should not be taken lightly because this is a time of great adjustment. The ceremony is over now, and it is hard for the couple to realize that they are really married -- husband and wife! The keynote of this time should be a leisurely detachment in surroundings completely free from responsibility. The couple should exercise great caution during the first few days, and the marriage should not be consummated in haste lest there be despair, frustration, and disappointment.

The honeymoon is the "springtime" of a couple's life! This fresh and fragrant spring must not be wasted because the freshness and charm of this precious time can never be repeated -- it can only be remembered!

THE FIRST YEAR OF MARRIAGE

The first year of marriage is a year of adjusting to one another. It is a time of "personal unveiling" of one another. Two people cannot live in the intimate relationship of marriage without fully revealing themselves to each other. In the first year they begin a "scaling-down" in their estimate of each other. This sometimes is a painful experience, and both may have to fight against a secret sense of disillusionment. They need to keep in mind that this is a time to be courteously frank about feelings and reactions about one another. With this attitude and a proper love for each other -- and with God's help, all problems can be solved.

(NOTE: I am indebted to many who have taught me these truths that I am now passing on to you. I hope you find them of benefit.)

(From "The Voice", February 1977)