

The Importance of Marriage



God is a Matchmaker (Part 1)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again at the beginning of a new week, sharing with you Keys to Successful Living which God has placed in my hand through many years of personal experience and Christian ministry. You may find the title of my talks this week a little unusual. It is, "God Is a Matchmaker." In other words, I'll be sharing with you how you can find the mate God has appointed for you.

I've been happily married twice myself, and I'll be sharing quite extensively out of my personal experience. Even if you're already married, I believe that what I have to share will be both helpful and inspiring to you.

Today I'm going to show you the importance which God Himself attaches to marriage as revealed in the Bible. Even many Bible believing Christians, it seems to me, have no real understanding of the unique importance placed upon marriage in the Bible. The failure to appreciate the importance of marriage has disastrous consequences. It leads inevitably to a lowering of the quality of family life and this, in turn, lowers the life and culture of society as a whole.

There are three ways in which the Bible emphasizes the importance of marriage, at least there are three ways which I'm principly going to mention in my talk today—I'm sure there are more than three. The first way that I have in mind that the Bible emphasizes the importance of marriage is the position that it gives to marriage in human history. If you look at the overview of human history unfolded in the Bible, you'll find that the record of human history begins and ends with a marriage. Let's look, first of all, at the beginning of human history as recorded in Genesis chapter 2 verses 18–23:

> "The Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.' [The old translation said 'a helpmeet.'] Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam no suitable

> helper was found. So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman', for she was taken out of man.'"

In the Hebrew, the word for man and the word for woman are closely related in sound and spelling. Well, as we look at that record, we see that when God introduced Adam into creation, everything was already perfect. Everything he could ever need was already provided; he was surrounded by richness, abundance, beauty and a tremendous variety of creation. And to him was given the privilege of naming all the created animals. There was just one thing lacking in that total beautiful environment of Adam, there was no mate for Adam, no helper suitable for him. And the Lord had said it was not good for the man to be alone.

Now, how did God supply this one lack in that situation? The answer is that God Himself provided the bride. And my personal conviction is He deliberately allowed Adam to feel the lack in order that he might fully appreciate what the Lord intended to provide. So the Lord, the God of all history, is the first matchmaker. He decided that Adam was to marry and He gave the bride away. He brought her and presented her to Adam.

Now let's look at the climax of human history. This is recorded in Revelation chapter 19 verses 6–9. Genesis is the beginning; Revelation is the consummation or summing up of history.

> "And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude and as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, 'Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.' And it was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. And he said to me, 'Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.' And he said to me, 'These are true words of God.'"

So you see, the consummation of all human history and the consummation of all blessedness is found in the marriage supper of the Lamb. In a certain sense, all through human history God has been achieving one supreme objective: to prepare a bride worthy for His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And so the climax comes when the bride is ready and she's presented to her husband and all creation says, "Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready."

So you see, human history begins with a marriage and ends with a marriage, and all the space in between is the unfolding of the result of the first marriage and the preparation for the second marriage.

That's the first way in which the Bible emphasizes the importance of marriage. Now let me point out another way of tremendous importance, and it is this: marriage typifies the relationship of Christ to His church. Paul brings this out very clearly in Ephesians chapter 5 verses 25–27:

> "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless."

So the love of a human husband for his wife is a reflection of the love which Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has for His bride, the church. And then Paul goes on at the end of that chapter, Ephesians 5 verses 31–32:

> "For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the Church."

In other words, human marriage is a mystery which contains in it a picture of the relationship of Jesus Christ to His church. The most holy and sacred of all relationships is typified by marriage. What importance that gives to marriage. It's my personal conviction that unless Christians can understand marriage in the light of the Bible, they cannot fully understand their own relationship to Jesus Christ for the marriage relationship is a pattern of that higher and eternal relationship, the relationship between Jesus Christ and His bride, the church.

Now I'll point out a third way in which the Bible emphasizes the importance of marriage and this is the way in which God

Himself has protected marriage, has surrounded it with His own ordinances of protection to keep it as sacred as He intended it to be. Hebrews chapter 13 verse 4 says this:

> "Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge."

You see, God demands that all men hold marriage in the highest esteem. He requires that we all respect and honor this institution of marriage. This is a universal requirement of God amongst all races, all men everywhere. And He has protected the sacredness of marriage with His own declaration of His judgment against those who in any way impair it or defile it or make light of it.

The Scripture that I've read says "fornicators and adulterers God will judge." Those are people who do not rightly respect marriage. Fornicators are those who seek sexual relationship outside of marriage. Adulterers are those who've entered into a marriage relationship and then break their marriage vow and seek relationships outside the marriage. In essence, both are guilty of showing disrespect and dishonor for the institution of marriage and God is determined that this institution shall be protected. So He has said in His Word, "fornicators and adulterers God will judge." To me, that's a very powerful statement. If it had said simply, "fornicators and adulterers will be judged," that would have been sufficient; but when it says, "God will judge," it's as though it brings God right on the scene personally. When it comes to the breaking and defiling of marriage, God says, "I'll judge that in person. I'll accept responsibility for this. It's so sacred in my eyes that I will not tolerate any defilement or any breaking of the sacredness of marriage." God Himself intervenes. He doesn't leave the judgment, as it were, to others, but He Himself accepts responsibility for encircling the marriage bed and the marriage relationship with sanctity that shall not be broken down.

Probably one of the greatest problems of the present civilization is a disrespect and a dishonor for marriage, but it's not in line with Scripture. God requires all of us to honor the marriage institution.

So there are three reasons why the Bible places importance on marriage. First, because marriage begins and ends human history; second, because marriage is a picture of the relationship of Christ to His church; and third, because God Himself will protect the sanctity of marriage.

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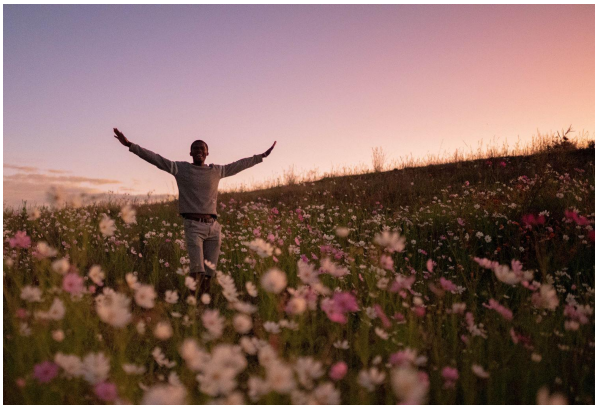

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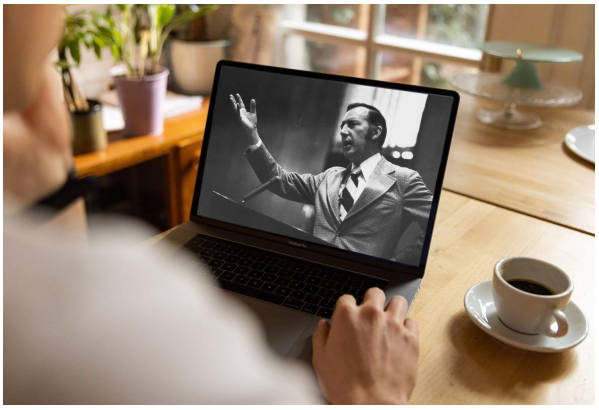

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