

Marriage to Lydia



God is a Matchmaker (Part 4)
by Derek Prince

In my previous talks this week I've established the fact that in His teaching on marriage, Jesus went right back to God's purpose in creation. He refused to accept any lower standard. In the pattern for marriage set by God in creation, we find four successive phases, four distinctive features of marriage as God originally ordained it. First, it was God's decision, not Adam's. It was God who saw that Adam needed a helpmeet. Second, it was God who formed Eve for Adam. Adam had nothing to do with that process. Third, it was God who brought Eve to Adam. Adam didn't go out and look for Eve; Eve was brought to him as his appointed mate by God Himself. Fourth, God established the terms of their relationship; in essence it was leave and cleave. The man was to leave all other associations that would interfere with his commitment to his wife and they were so to cleave to one another and be united that they would become one flesh.

Let me just quickly recapitulate that.

1. First, it was God's decision, not Adam's.
2. Second, God formed Eve for Adam.
3. Third, God brought Eve to Adam.
4. And fourth, God established the terms of their relationship.

Now, I believe that all these four principles still apply today in the outworking of God's purpose for marriage in our lives. In other words, I take my stand with Jesus. Man may have changed but God has not changed. His original plan and standard for marriage still holds good. That's the way He wants marriage to be brought about.

Today I'm going to share with you along these lines in a very personal way. I'm going to tell you how God joined me to my first wife, Lydia. At the time of my marriage to Lydia in 1946, I had been a committed Christian for about five years. I believed the Bible and was sincerely seeking to serve the Lord but I did not understand the biblical principles of marriage, as God later revealed them to me. And yet, as I look back, it amazes me and also strengthens my faith to see how God worked in my life exactly according to the principles that He Himself had established when He created Adam and Eve and joined them together.

Now let me just give briefly some of the details in a way that will bring out these points that I'm trying to establish. I came to know the Lord in a personal way in the British Army in 1941 in an Army barrack room in the middle of the night, I had a dramatic, life changing, personal encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ. From that day onward, I knew that my life was in God's hands and I knew without any process of reasoning that God had a plan for my life. The Bible became the only book I really wanted to read and I continued for the next four and a half years in the British Army, mainly in North Africa and then finally in the land of Israel. And I was released from the British Army in 1946 and began to live in Jerusalem.

During that period in the Army, God had shown me very clearly in various ways that He wanted me to serve Him in the land of Israel and in the city of Jerusalem. And while on leave in the land of Israel in 1943, I had met a very remarkable lady. Her name was Lydia Christensen. She had been a teacher in the Danish state school system but the Lord Jesus had appeared to her visibly and personally challenged her and called her to leave her home, her country, her profession, her fortune and just go out in naked faith to Jerusalem. And there, under the direction of the Lord, she became mother to a group of children who had no parents to care for them. She probably had, in the course of the years, about 70 children through her hands.

In 1943, when I first met her, there were about eight girls in the home who knew no other mother but Lydia. Six of them were Jewish, one was Arab and one was English.

Then in 1944, the Lord saw fit to have the Army transfer me to Israel and I was stationed in a Jewish settlement a little way outside Haifa. I had been deeply impressed by what I saw of Lydia and the home and the children. It was to me something unique. I had never seen such peace, I'd never seen such freedom in the Holy Spirit. The way the children naturally walked with the Lord, prayed and just lived their lives in faith impressed me deeply.

By my own background, I had been a professor of philosophy at Cambridge. I had been an only child, I had never had brothers or sisters, so there were probably no two setups that could have been more different than the home that I saw with Lydia and my own background.

In 1944, God did two very special things in my life. He spoke to me twice, very clearly and directly. The first time He called me, He called me to be a teacher of the Scriptures. And that calling, I'm glad to say, has held good until today. I always comment on that: "Faithful is He that calleth you who also will do it." It's not our cleverness, but it's God's faithfulness that brings us in to what He's called us.

A little later I was praying for Lydia and the children because I felt a real deep compassion for them. They obviously had very little money and Lydia had a very hard time there alone on her own in a country that wasn't very sympathetic to women on their own. She was father, mother, doctor, teacher, lawyer—everything to that one little household. And so I felt a kind of spiritual duty to pray for her. And I remember one day I was praying for Lydia and the children and God spoke to me. It was one of the most unexpected and astonishing things that the Lord has ever said to me. And I have to confess He's said some rather surprising things at different times.

As I was praying for Lydia, the Lord spoke to me very, very clearly and He said, "I have joined you together under the same yoke and in the same harness." And I thought to myself, "Whatever does God mean by that?" And I began to think it over and I thought, "God must want us to work together." And I thought, "That's very improbable. A thing like that couldn't possibly be God's will." But the more I prayed, the clearer it became.

Now, I cannot go into all the details that followed. I'm sure some of you would like me to, but about one and a half years later, Lydia and I were married. And only after we were married did I fully understand what God had said. He said, "I've joined you together under the same yoke and in the same harness." The yoke, of course, in Scripture is always marriage; the harness speaks of working together. And that so perfectly described the thirty years that I was privileged to spend with Lydia. We were always under the same yoke and in the same harness.

As I look back, I realize that in the natural there were many reasons why I should not have married Lydia. She was considerably older than I was, she was from a very different culture, she was a very strong person—she'd established her own mission work which was respected by all the Christians in a very difficult environment where few other people had had much success.

And on the other hand, as I've said, I had no experience of children in my life, I was an only child, something of an academic and pretty stiff in my own British way. If anybody had ever come to me and asked for counsel in such a situation, my attitude would have been very negative. But you see, marriage is God's initiative, not man's. It's God that forms the woman, not the man that forms the woman. It's God that brings the woman to the man. And I'll just have to say that looking back, that was exactly how it worked out.

God vindicated His choice of Lydia for me. We spent thirty years together in tremendously active, exacting forms of Christian service; sometimes in danger, sometimes in hardship, often in a measure of poverty, but we were happy, we achieved a unity which was something that impressed many. Later, when we traveled overseas to many nations and ministered together, people would come up and marvel at the unity between us. I remember one man came to me and he said, “The two of you work together just like one person.” Man cannot achieve that you see, but that’s God’s purpose in marriage. The two shall become one flesh. If we obey God, if we meet His conditions, if we heed His voice, He’ll bring it about.

I can say to the glory of God that through our marriage hundreds and hundreds of people were blessed, were helped, found the Lord, were healed, were filled with the Holy Spirit. This is a record of fact. People came to our home often all hours of the day and night, we never turned them away, we were able to help many of them. We ministered on various different continents to various different kinds of people, to people from different denominations but the calling of God held good. And if I were to emphasize one thing in it all, it would be our unity, especially our unity in prayer. I cannot think of anything more important in marriage than that, unity in prayer. Jesus said, “If two of you shall agree [shall harmonize] touching anything that you shall ask, it shall be done for them by my Father which is in heaven.” What a challenge that is to married couples, husband and wife, where both are believers. If you can achieve that harmony, that unity, then your prayers will have an irresistible power. I can look back on situations and things that Lydia and I prayed for and I can just marvel how God invariably gave us the answer to our prayers when we prayed in that unity, in that harmony.

So, I’m just saying to you today, out of my own experience, that God’s plan for marriage, as He originally devised it, is the best. He hasn’t lowered His standards, but He’ll lift us up to His standards and He’ll work it out in our lives if we’ll trust Him.

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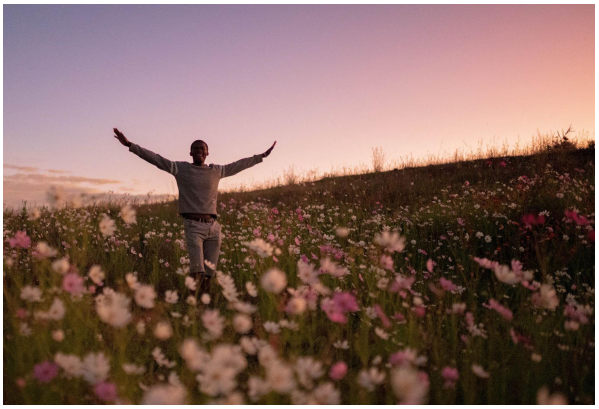

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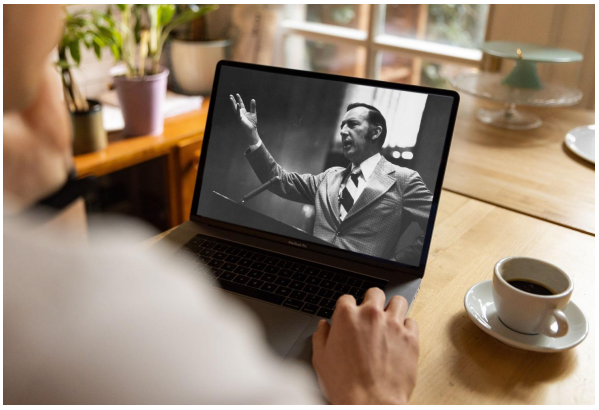

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