

Marriage to Ruth



God is a Matchmaker (Part 5)
by Derek Prince

In my talks this week, I've been speaking about the pattern for marriage which God established at creation—and from which He on His side, has never since departed. And I pointed out four main elements in that pattern. First of all, it was God's decision, not Adam's, that Adam should marry. Second, God formed Eve for Adam. Third, God brought Eve to Adam. Adam did not have to go ut and look for his mate. And fourth, God established the terms of their relationship. And it's centered in one essential purpose—that they should become completely one. I've expressed my conviction that all these four principles still apply today in the outworking of God's purpose for marriage.

Yesterday I shared with you in a personal way how these principles worked out in my first marriage to Lydia, even though at that time I myself had no real understanding of the principles. By His own choice, God sovereignly brought Lydia and me together and He then vindicated His choice in the thirty years of happy and successful and fruitful marriage that He granted us together. In Luke 7:35, Jesus said this:

> "...wisdom is vindicated by all her children."

If you let God's wisdom choose and plan your life, God's wisdom will be vindicated by the results that it produces in your life.

Today I'm going to share with you the story of how God joined me to my second wife, Ruth. You'll see that once again God worked according to His own unchanging principles.

In 1975, God called my first wife, Lydia, home after just about fifty years of intensive full-time service. And I experienced the agony of bereavement. I don't believe that any person who has not lost a lifetime mate can ever really appreciate all that's involved and I'd have to say that my own experience has given me a deeper compassion for both widows and widowers. It was like something had been torn out of the innermost part of my being and there was a tremendous gaping hole left.

I told God when Lydia was gone that I was willing to live single for the rest of my life if that was His will and for awhile, I was quite prepared to believe that it was.

About a couple of years later, God began to renew my first calling to the land of Israel and I was able to go there on a special visit with a group of ecumenical leaders from various different backgrounds. When the rest of the group left, I decided to remain a week and seek God about His will for my return to Israel. In the course of the week, I visited a group of people who'd been responsible for distributing some of my books in the land of Israel and I heard that the lady who worked as their secretary was invalided with a back injury and was in her apartment. Well, the Lord has given me special favor for ministering to people with back problems and I thought to myself it would be very un-Christian if I didn't offer to go and pray for her. I had a young Christian brother with me and we arranged to visit this lady in the address that was given us.

We drove around Jerusalem, frustrated, unable to find the address. I was just about to say to my young brother, "Well, let's give up. We've done our best." And we discovered we were right outside the door. So we went inside. The lady was there lying on a couch, we prayed for her and showed our compassion and our interest and walked out. And I thought to myself, "Well, that's a duty done. I really trust the Lord has begun the healing process." And I dismissed it from my mind.

The last night I was to be in Israel, I decided that I really must seek God for the answer and I had one of the most unusual nights of my whole life. I went to bed at 11 and got up again at 6 a.m. next morning. I had not slept a wink, I hadn't even become sleepy. For seven hours God had been speaking to me about His purpose for my life. He reminded me of the promises He'd given me, He assured me that if I would walk in obedience and faith, He would fulfill those promises and in the middle of the night He gave me a vision—a very clear vision. I saw a hill that was rather like the slope up to the Western Wall of the Old City and there was a zigzag road going up the hill and I realized that this was the way back to Israel for me and God was showing me that it would be uphill and that it would not be direct but it would apparently go from one stage to the next and sometimes the moves might be rather difficult to understand. But right at the foot of the hill and at the entrance to the road very clearly I saw a woman sitting in a rather unusual position in a dress of a somewhat unusual color and I immediately identified the woman as the one that I had gone to pray for earlier that week. And it seemed to me that the Lord was showing that it was His will for me to marry her.

I have to say that my first reaction was fear. I said, "God, are you asking me to marry a woman I don't love?" But the thing didn't leave me, so I determined I'd pray for a month before I did anything.

During that month—I didn't know it, but God was also speaking to that woman. That's the marvelous thing. And in a rather unusual and dramatic way, God brought us together again. And I shared a little with her about my calling and the amazing thing was, because of her back injury (which was not fully healed), as I was talking to her instead of sitting on a chair, she was sitting on the floor with her back against the wall and she was wearing exactly the dress that I'd seen in that vision sitting in exactly the posture. So God surely made it clear to me that I'd understood Him right. But we made no commitment to one another.

We met again in Jerusalem and this time I related to Ruth what I felt was God's will for us. She responded but somehow we felt that we had to wait upon God. For reasons I can't go into in detail, we put this purpose of God and the concept of our marriage on God's altar for three months. We never corresponded, we had no contact with one another, we wanted to see if God would kill it or bring it to life. And at the end of that three months when we met again, we both knew without question that this was God's plan for our lives and God gave us full release to enter into a marriage which He has subsequently blessed in a very beautiful way.

As I look back now and consider what has happened in my life since Ruth and I married, I realize how beautiful and perfect God's provision has been. The Lord said about Eve that she was the helper that Adam needed and this has been true of Ruth. She has so many skills, so many abilities, such dedication that I could not now be fulfilling my God-given ministry without her help. Her background was in conservative Judaism and she had gone to Israel three years before I met her there as an immigrant just to live out her life in Israel among the Jewish people and let her light shine there. She had learned the very hard lessons of the life of faith; she'd been tested and tried with poverty, with sickness and in other ways; and we were ready to share our lives together.

Again, in this second marriage, as in the first, the real thing that is so precious is our unity and our harmony. Studying at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, we spent the summer living in the home of a somewhat older Jewish couple who made no profession of faith either in Judaism or in any other religion. We spent three months there in just one room in their home attending the university every day. After we'd been there about two months, this Jewish lady, who is by no means emotional or in any way what you would consider spiritual, began to tell us her impression of us. And she said, "The first day you entered my home, I knew you were special people." She said, "There was a light on your countenance." And then she said, "I have never seen such peace, such harmony and such unity." We ended up the closest friends

with that couple, as close as we've been with anybody. But what a blessing and what a testimony to the wisdom of God that because we obeyed Him, because we followed the steps that He took, He was able to make our unity a testimony.

We are committed to God and to one another, for Jerusalem, for Israel, for God's people everywhere. Since we made that commitment to God and to one another, the doors that He's opened for us have been dramatic and amazing. He has done things that if I'd been told them beforehand, I doubt whether I could ever have believed them.

I say all this as a testimony to God's faithfulness and to encourage you to believe God for His highest. Don't settle for less. God has got a high plan for every one of His children.

Let me remind you very briefly of those four principles of marriage established at creation which are still valid today and as I remind you of them, just check on them and see whether you're willing to follow God's way.

1. First, marriage was God's decision.
2. Second, God formed the woman for the man.
3. Third, God brought the woman to the man.
4. Fourth, God established the terms of their relationship.

That's what God wants to do in the lives of His believing, committed people today. I say to you once again, believe God for the best and don't settle for less. May God bless you and have His way in your life.

Radio Program

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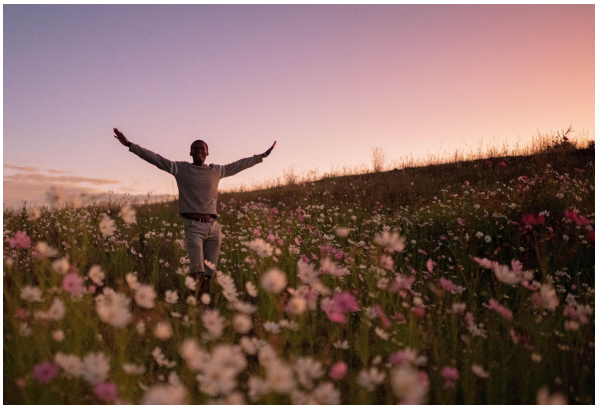

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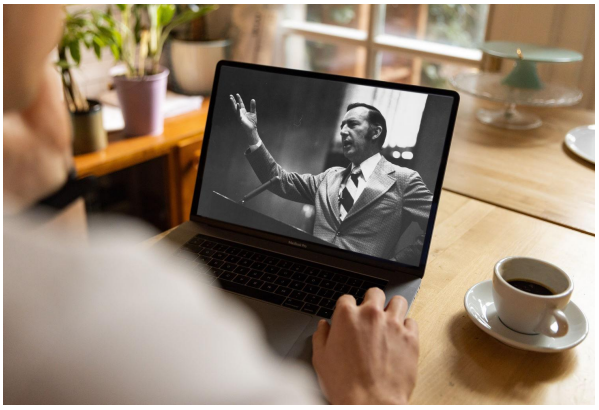

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