

Renewed Marriages

All Things New #5 | Ephesians 5:22-33

January 30, 2022

Prayer: Married, not yet married, divorced, widowed

Introduction

On marriage, we often want a “checklist” approach. *Do what I do. Tell me what to do.*

- Before I offer practical advice, I want to ground us in the story and meaning of marriage
- Ephesians 5 passage, but one more super important passage from Genesis

Genesis 2 ¹⁸ Then the Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper corresponding to him.” ¹⁹ The Lord God formed out of the ground every wild animal and every bird of the sky, and brought each to the man to see what he would call it. And whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. ²⁰ The man gave names to all the livestock, to the birds of the sky, and to every wild animal; but for the man no helper was found corresponding to him. ²¹ So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to come over the man, and he slept. God took one of his ribs and closed the flesh at that place. ²² Then the Lord God made the rib he had taken from the man into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³ And the man said: This one, at last, is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; this one will be called “woman,” for she was taken from man. ²⁴ This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh. ²⁵ Both the man and his wife were naked, yet felt no shame.

Three things: 1) definition, 2) the dance (M/F), 3) developing a healthy marriage.

I. Definition

Marriage is a covenantal, whole-life union between a man and a woman that is designed to point to the gospel.

1. Covenantal | Malachi 2:14
 - a. Only one verse in the bible where marriage is explicitly called a *covenant*, Malachi 2:14. But it is implied everywhere, matches what we know “covenant” to be.
 - b. Lots of different types of covenant: God + humanity, business, political, friendship
 - c. Covenant = relationship + agreement
 - i. Contract = impersonal | Playstation terms
 - ii. Casual = unstable | Server at restaurant, neighbor
 - iii. Increased vulnerability calls for increased clarity | WEDDING VOWS
2. Whole life | marriage is a combination of many different relationships
 - a. One flesh includes, but is not limited to physical intimacy
3. Man and woman | remember last week’s *overlap and distinction*
 - a. Same-ness: “flesh of my flesh” | Paul says “nobody hated their own flesh”
 - b. Difference: different biology, distinction in calling/roles **More on that in a moment**
 - c. As M/F is not incidental to humanity, it is also not incidental to marriage
4. Gospel portrait | Ephesians 5:32

- a. *This mystery is profound, but I am talking about Christ and the church.*
- b. Covenant—whole life—same/different
 - i. Sameness: he took on human flesh, experienced weakness
 - ii. Difference: he never sinned, he died on a cross, and rose again

II. The Dance of Marriage

There is no way around words like “headship” and “submission”

- Approach 1: awkwardly ignore
- Approach 2: explain it away | culturally uncomfortable
- Approach 3: enjoy them too much |
- Or, we could say *this is here from God, for a reason, and God intends it to be for our good, so let’s work hard to understand it in the context of this passage, and in context of the storyline*
 - *The dance, Tim Keller, who stole it from C.S. Lewis*

Marriage is a dance between two perfectly corresponding partners who listen to the same music, and embrace their roles in loving and sometimes surprising ways.

1. Corresponding partners | Genesis 2:18
 - a. *I will make a helper corresponding to him* | ezer ki-neged-hu
 - b. neged (148): before (32), in front of (9), opposite (23)
 - i. Mirror image. Even the word “rib” should be “side” or “half” is nowhere else in the OT used for physical body, it’s most often the side of a house.
 - c. Ezer (16): helper, protector
 - i. Three references to military or political assistance, but the vast majority (11) times it’s in reference to God coming along and rescuing his people
 1. **Deuteronomy 33**²⁹ How happy you are, Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by the LORD? He is the shield that protects you, the sword you boast in.
 - ii. *It’s not good for the man to be alone* | incomplete and in need of help
 - d. Not an executive assistant. Corresponding partner, providing what the man can’t
2. Same music | Ephesians 2:18-21
 - a. Winston Smith points out music language *immediately* prior to this section
 - b. ...be filled by the Spirit: ¹⁹ speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music with your heart to the Lord, ²⁰ giving thanks always for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ submitting to one another in the fear of Christ.
 - c. All Christians (men/women) are to adopt a submissive and humble posture
 - i. We are equally created in God’s image
 - ii. We are equally dependent on one another | **1 Cor 11**
 - iii. Equally recipients of God’s saving grace | **Gal 3:28**
 - d. The music is love: value, seek their good, make sacrifices *as Jesus himself did*
 - i. The summary of all God’s commands: love
3. Defined roles | Ephesians 5:22-24

- a. Within the broader context/command to love, now we can turn to headship/submit
 - b. ²²Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord, ²³because the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of the body. ²⁴Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives are to submit to their husbands in everything.
 - c. No command anywhere for husbands to submit to wives | Colossians 3, 1 Peter 3
 - d. Q: *what if "head" doesn't mean authority?* | Source, top
 - i. Why then the word "submit"?
 - ii. Septuagint uses the same word for leaders of tribes in Judges
 - iii. Same word in Matthew and Luke/Acts for "cornerstone"
 - iv. Early church history used a-kephale for those who wouldn't follow bishops
 - v. Colossians 2:10 Jesus is the head of every ruler and authority
 - e. Yes, this role of leadership and authority may involve making a decision on behalf of the family, but it is far more about accepting the responsibility to love and build up
 - i. SEVEN commands to husbands to love, not make decisions
 - f. So much of the pushback here is because authority is so often used unChristlike
 - i. I'm the boss, I get the privileges, I get the corner office, I give orders
 - 1. Overreaction: "Jesus didn't use authority" | exact opposite
 - ii. He had/has all authority and uses it for our salvation and flourishing
4. Sometimes surprising | Ephesians 5:26-29
- a. Did you notice all the domestic language in here? Surprising
 - b. **Cynthia Long Westfall** When the husbands are addressed, the male role is not described in terms of the expected categories of warrior, protector, provider, and patron. Instead, the imagery quickly shifts to household scenes...The domestic realm is the women's domain and role in ancient Greek, Hellenistic culture, and Judaism...[These acts] would similarly sound like a role reversal to a Hellenist.
 - c. The way men and women are wired, some things come easier! Develop the other
 - i. Men: domestic chores!
 - ii. Women: Prov. 31 "she girds up her loins and makes her arms strong"

Winston Smith As we live in relationship with each other, guided by the Spirit of Jesus, we should live "musical" lives with each other. Our words and actions should be hymns of praise to God and encouragement to each other. Part of that music is a willingness to submit to one another in relationships structured by authority. It should look and sound much more like a dance than a forced march. In a march, one person sets the tempo with the baton and everyone falls into lockstep. In the marital dance, however, the husband leads as he listens to the music of Christ. Because the wife hears the same music, they're able to keep time in their own minds and move as one.

Developing Your Marriage

No "just tell me what to do" or "do what I do." Particularized and unique to you.

**Marriage class with Pastor Jamin and Kelsie

1. Pursue Jesus first | marriage isn't ultimate, walking with God is
2. Cultivate friendships | especially for men
3. Work on your weaknesses
4. Celebrate their strengths
5. Embrace the ordinary | no big trips to Mexico
6. Live in God's love