

Lesson
1

What Marriage Is

Marriage is the product of a divine plan. Human beings did not think it up or invent it—God *created* it. The Garden of Eden is where He chose to institute it. Throughout His Word He upholds it. Christ’s presence at the wedding in Cana confirms it.

In this lesson we will study how the relationship of Christ to His church is reflected in every marriage built upon divine principles.

Someone has likened marriage to a *kit* which “contains all of the pieces of something that must be put together.” It requires some sanding of rough parts, some gluing, a bit of hammering, some dusting, waxing, and polishing. But the result is beautifully rewarding.

The kind of marriage that will have far-reaching effects for good is the one that is built according to the pattern and directions given in God’s Word.



In this lesson you will study . . .

Marriage: A God-given Institution

Marriage: A Special Relationship

Marriage: A Sacred Union

Marriage: Importance for the World

This lesson will help you . . .

- Explain when God instituted marriage and why.
- Describe God’s plan and pattern for marriage.
- Name the far-reaching effects of the family.

MARRIAGE: A GOD-GIVEN INSTITUTION

Given by God as a Blessing for Man

Objective 1. Explain when God instituted marriage and why.

Marriage is the only institution, or organization, on earth today that began before sin came into the world. We read about it in God's Word, the Bible.

Genesis 2:18, 21-22. Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to live alone. I will make a suitable companion to help him." Then the Lord God made the man fall into a deep sleep, and while he was sleeping, he took out one of the man's ribs and closed up the flesh. He formed a woman out of the rib and brought her to him.



For You To Do

In each of these *For You to Do* sections, the questions or exercises will help you review or apply what you have just studied. Answer each question or complete each exercise before looking at the answer we have given.

1 What is the only institution in the world that was established before sin came into the world?

.....

2 How was the first woman made?

.....

3 Who gave the first man and woman to each other in the first marriage ceremony?

.....

4 Read Genesis 2:23-24, then circle the letter in front of each TRUE statement.

- a God named Adam's companion "woman."
- b When the Bible says of a man and a woman, "They become one," it refers to marriage.
- c God did not create woman from the dust of the ground.

Given With a Pattern to Be Followed

We see that God made Eve to be a companion for Adam before sin came into the world. So we know that God Himself gave man and woman the marriage relationship as part of His perfect plan for them. Because God included marriage in the perfect conditions that He provided in the Garden of Eden, we can accept it as His pattern for all men in all times.

God is pleased to have people marry, but He has standards for marriage. He expects His people to follow these standards, to go by the pattern He gives them for marriage.

Unfortunately, sin entered the Garden of Eden. Ever since then sin has been twisting and spoiling many of the blessings that God has given man. Sin has ruined millions of marriages. If you want your marriage to be the wonderful relationship that God wants you to enjoy, follow the pattern that He gives you in His Word, the Bible.

Today, as never before, there is an attack on the institution of marriage and the home. Many would even do away with marriage altogether and substitute temporary arrangements for living together without being married. These arrangements can then be ended whenever either party desires. In many parts of the world, two-thirds of the marriages end in divorce. This is totally contrary to God's pattern given in His Word. He desires that your marriage be a relationship in

which He can express His love for you. This can happen only as you honor Him, by seeking His guidance and following His pattern.

The Bible gives us much teaching about marriage and the home. Some of you who are studying this course have not yet married. Let God guide you in your plans for marriage. Those of you who are already married will find that this course can help you make your marriage better and happier.



For You To Do

5 What has ruined millions of marriages?

.....

6 Where can you find the best pattern for a happy marriage?

.....

Given to Teach Spiritual Truths

The kind of marriage that God has planned for you is a picture of the love, respect, union, and companionship between Christ and His church. In the Old Testament God calls Himself the husband of His people. In the New Testament the church is called the bride of Christ.

Ephesians 5:31-33. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and unite with his wife, and the two will become one.” There is a deep secret truth revealed in this scripture, which I understand as applying to Christ and the church. But it also applies to you: every husband must love his wife as himself, and every wife must respect her husband.



For You To Do

7 Circle the letter in front of each characteristic you would expect to find in a home where the teachings of Ephesians 5:31-33 are honored.

- | | |
|---------------|------------------|
| a) Peace | d) Strife |
| b) Discontent | e) Understanding |
| c) Anger | f) Joy |

8 Will you pray that God will help you to build the kind of marriage that will reflect His love?

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MARRIAGE: A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

Belonging to Each Other for Life

Objective 2. Describe God’s plan and pattern for marriage.

Marriage is the union of a man and a woman that legally and morally binds the two together for life and excludes intimate relationships with all others. In this way a home can be established and a family maintained. When a man and woman are united in marriage, “they become one.”



For You To Do

9 Marriage is

- a) temporary legal arrangement which can be dissolved at any time.
- b) permanent union of a man and woman before God.

10 A man and woman are bound together both

..... and in marriage.

Love and Companionship

God said that it was not good for man to be alone. He took a bone from man and made woman to meet his need for companionship.

Matthew Henry wrote that God didn't take a bone from Adam's foot so that he could trample on his wife. He didn't take a bone from his head so that his wife could rule over him. God took a rib from Adam's side, from close to his heart, so that man would love his wife, protect her, and keep her by his side.

The happiness of a marriage depends on the love and companionship between husband and wife. Eve was a part of Adam. Husband and wife become a part of each other. Their lives are joined into one life and neither is complete alone. Ephesians 5:28 says, "Men ought to love their wives just as they love their own bodies."



For You To Do

11 The happiness of a marriage depends on

- a) having enough money to enjoy life.
- b) the husband being master of the home.
- c) the relationship of love and sharing between the husband and wife.

Parenthood

Marriage usually brings the relationship and responsibilities of parenthood to a man and his wife. Their marriage forms a home and family where children can be born and have the love and care of a father and a mother. God's words to Adam and Eve show that parenthood is part of His plan: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it" (Genesis 1:28, KJV).

When children are born into a family, the parents have the responsibility of caring for them and providing a stable and harmonious homelife. God is very concerned that children be given the proper setting in which to grow and come to know Him. Read Mark 10:13-16, which will help you understand Jesus' attitude toward children.



For You To Do

- 12 Circle the letter before each of the TRUE statements.
- a Children need to have a stable home in which to grow.
 - b God's plan for marriage does not concern itself with children.
 - c Jesus specifically mentioned His love for children.
- 13 What do children need to receive in a home?
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MARRIAGE: A SACRED UNION

Objective 3. Explain the design behind the ideal marriage relationship.

One Man and Woman

There were no other people in the world besides Adam and Eve. Someone might think that God should have given Adam more than one wife so that the world could be populated more quickly. But God, who always knows best, gave him only one wife. This was God's design; this was God's ideal for marriage. Therefore, in the ideal marriage God provided one wife for one man.

Matthew 19:5-6. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and unite with his wife, and the two will become one." So they are no longer two, but one. Man must not separate, then, what God has joined together.



Jesus said that a man and woman would become one. Regardless of customs, this is the Bible teaching. In some parts of the world, custom permits a man to marry more than one wife. In one country it is the custom for a woman to marry more than one man. In another area, all of the sons of one family marry the same woman. And among some people the husbands trade wives. Some people divorce and remarry time after time. Others just live together without getting married. So, you see, customs do not offer you a practical guide for the right kind of marriage. For that you have to go to God's Word.



For You To Do

14 According to the Bible, God’s model or ideal for marriage provides wife for man. The thus joined make up the basic family unit.

God’s Laws About This Union

Jesus taught that nothing should break this union, or oneness, of a man with his wife. When God gave Moses the laws that we call the Ten Commandments, He included laws against sins which would destroy the union of man and wife:

Exodus 20:14, 17. Do not commit adultery. Do not desire another man’s . . . wife.

Either marriage partner who has sexual relations with another person commits adultery and is breaking God’s law. This is immoral. Even wanting someone else’s wife or husband is a sin. “But now I tell you: anyone who looks at a woman and wants to possess her is guilty of committing adultery with her in his heart” (Matthew 5:28). The New Testament also reinforces God’s warning against immorality. Marriage is to be honored by all, and husbands and wives must be faithful to each other. God will judge those who are immoral and those who commit adultery (Hebrews 13:4).



For You To Do

15 Memorize Hebrews 13:4. When you think you know it well, write it down; then check it with the verse in this lesson, or in your Bible.

MARRIAGE: IMPORTANCE FOR THE WORLD

Objective 4. *Name the far-reaching effects of the family on the local church, the community, the nation, and the world.*

Looking back over this lesson you can see that marriage is part of God’s plan for mankind. When we follow God’s teaching and pattern for marriage, we have a happy home. Our experiences in the home will help us understand better many spiritual truths.

God’s purpose is that husband and wife, parents and children, find in the family the love, companionship, and care that each one needs.

He has also established the family as the basic unit of society. His laws set the moral standards that men and women are to live by. Those who come from happy homes where they have learned to live together peaceably, will find this helps them in getting along with others. Communities, which are held in high respect, are made up of families who are honorable and upright. Good families make good communities, and good communities make good nations.

How important it is, then, for each family to accept God’s standards and go by His rules for happiness! How important to guard against the things that would ruin the home! And how important it is for you to learn what God has to say about your family and your home! God bless you as you study and put into practice what you learn in each lesson.



16 The basic unit of society is the

- a) school.
- b) church.
- c) family.

17 In your notebook list at least two far-reaching effects of a happy home.

Why not take time just now to pray for your home and all the members of your family. Ask God to make your home a real influence in the community. He can help you put into practice what you learn in this course.

Now think of all the students around the world who are studying these lessons in different languages. Pray that God will bless them and help them to have the kind of home He wants them to have.



Check Your Answers

The answers to your study questions are not given in the usual order, so that you will not see the answer to your next question ahead of time. Look for the number you need, and try not to look ahead.

- 9 b) permanent union of a man and woman before God.
- 1 Marriage.
- 10 legally, morally.
- 2 From Adam's rib.
- 11 c) the relationship of love and sharing between the husband and wife.
- 3 God.
- 12 Statements **a** and **b** are true.
- 4 Statements **b** and **c** are true.
- 13 The love and care of their mother and father.
- 5 Sin.
- 14 one, one, two.
- 6 In the Bible.
- 15 Write down the verse you have memorized; then check it.
- 7 a) Peace
e) Understanding
f) Joy
- 16 c) family.
- 8 Your answer.
- 17 Those coming from happy homes find it easier to get along with others; good families make good communities, and good communities make good nations.