

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 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.

The Plan

- A. Marriage: A God-given Institution
- B. Marriage: A Special Relationship
- C. Marriage: A Sacred Union
- D. Marriage: Importance for the World

The Goals

1. Explain when God instituted marriage and why.
2. Describe God's plan and pattern for marriage.
3. State the far-reaching effects of the family.

A. MARRIAGE: A GOD-GIVEN INSTITUTION

Given by God as a Blessing for Man

Goal 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.

The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." 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." (Genesis 2:18, 21–22)

Application

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

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2 How was the first woman made?

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

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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 that a man and a woman “become one,” it refers to marriage.
 - c) God did not create woman from the dust of the ground.
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Given With a Pattern to Be Followed

In giving Eve as a companion for Adam, God 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 people in all times.

God is pleased to have people marry, but He has standards for marriage. He expects His people to follow these standards. Unfortunately, sin entered the Garden of Eden, and ever since then, sin has been hindering many of the blessings that God has given humans. Sin has also ruined millions of marriages.

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 happens only as you honor Him, by seeking His guidance and following His pattern.

The Bible gives us much teaching about marriage and the home. 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. 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.

Application

5 What has ruined millions of marriages?

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

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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.

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. (Ephesians 5:31–33)

Application

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
- b)** Discontent
- c)** Anger
- d)** Strife
- e)** Understanding
- f)** Joy

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



B. MARRIAGE: A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

Belonging to Each Other for Life

Goal 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 in a way that pleases God. When a man and woman are united in marriage, they become one.

Application

9 Marriage is a

- 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 did not take a bone from Adam’s foot so that he could trample on his wife. He did not 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. Ephesians 5:28 says, “In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.”

Application

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.
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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 increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it" (Genesis 1:28).

When children are born into a family, the parents have the responsibility of caring for them and providing a stable and harmonious home life. 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.

Application

12 Circle the letter before each TRUE statement.

- 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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C. MARRIAGE: A SACRED UNION

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 and God’s ideal for marriage.

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.” (Matthew 19:5–6)

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, customs do not offer a practical guide for the godly marriage. For that you have to go to God’s Word.

Application

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 Marriage

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: “You shall not commit adultery . . . You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife” (Exodus 20:14, 17).

Either marriage partner who has sexual relations with another person commits adultery and is breaking God's law. This is immoral. Even desiring someone else's wife or husband is a sin. "But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed 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).

Application

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.



D. MARRIAGE: IMPORTANCE FOR THE WORLD

Goal 3. State the far-reaching effects of the family.

Looking back over this lesson you can see that marriage is part of God's plan for humankind. 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 live 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.

Application

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 **c)** 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.