

WHAT MAKES A MARRIAGE? A Superior Plan for Marriage

INTRODUCTION

1. How does the Bible view marriage? It has a high view of marriage.
2. Marriage was instituted by the Creator from the beginning for the well-being and happiness of man. When God created man, placed him in Eden, then made the woman from his side, he stated his plan for man. He knew man's most basic needs and designed a plan for them to be met (Gen. 2:18ff).
3. This is a fundamental principle. God designed marriage. We should listen to his word to know its purpose. If we follow God's plan marriage will thrive and prosper; if we follow our own ways then our marriages will scarcely survive.
4. From the biblical point of view, what makes a marriage?

I. WHAT MAKES A MARRIAGE ENDURE? THE PRINCIPLE OF LIFE-LONG COMMITMENT. THE PRINCIPLE OF INTEGRITY.

A. Marriage is described in Scripture as a covenant (Mal. 2:14).

1. The marriage covenant is based on promises, vows, and commitments made in good faith. They are vows made before God. The vows are what really hold a marriage together. So, unfaithfulness to one's marriage vows amounts to covenant-breaking.
2. Other things are important ingredients in a successful and enduring marriage—love, communication, a healthy sex life, etc. But ultimately a marriage does not endure because of any of these things. It endures because the people who made the vows are people of integrity.

B. Marriage from the beginning was designed to be a life-long commitment (Matt. 5:31-32; 19:1-9).

II. WHAT MAKES A MARRIAGE FUNCTION? THE PRINCIPLE OF MUTUAL LOVE AND RESPECT

A. Consider the teaching of Paul in **Ephesians 5:22-33**.

B. The marriage relationship is analogous to the relationship between Christ and the church. Several key ideas need to be noticed:

1. Submissiveness as to the Lord (wives)
2. Christ-like headship (husbands)
3. Christ-like, sacrificial love (husbands)
4. Christ-like concern (husbands)
5. Respect (wives)
6. Oneness

C. This passage emphasizes *roles*.

1. Many do not accept this principle today. They want "equality." The Bible's teaching does not make man and woman unequal, but it does define different roles. They are

equals—in God’s image, in their need for companionship, in their relationship to Christ (Gal. 3:28) and as partners in the marriage. But God has arranged that men and women fulfill different roles or positions in marriage—loving headship of the man and subjection of the woman.

2. It is this “equal but different” nature of marriage, where each one humbly fulfills the roles assigned by God that marriages function as they were intended.

D. This passage emphasizes *attitudes*.

E. This passage emphasizes *unselfish service*.

1. God made man with an inherent need for companionship (Gen. 2:18-23).
2. As companions husbands and wives try to provide for the needs of the other.
3. Paul spoke of the husband “nourishing” and “cherishing” his wife as he would his own flesh.
4. Prov. 31:10-31 describes the “excellent wife.” The descriptive terms in the passage make us think of service, providing for the other’s needs. They also are terms that apply to the man as well as the woman.

III. WHAT MAKES A MARRIAGE HAPPY? SHARING, ROMANCE, SPIRITUAL FELLOWSHIP

- A. A married couple needs to learn to enjoy and appreciate each other. They work to cultivate the relationship. They share things. They do things together. They do things for each other. They laugh and have fun together. They honor each other and praise each other. They avoid taking the other for granted. They take care of each other. They take care of themselves for the other. By doing all of these things, they protect the marriage relationship and keep romance alive and growing (Prov. 5:18; Heb. 13:4).
- B. Perhaps the single most important ingredient in a good marriage is that the husband and wife are partners in pursuit of the same high goals in life. They have the same values. They are together committed to the same ideals—those things they hold as most important (1 Pet. 1:3; 3:7).
- C. How important that they are Christians! How important that they live their faith! How important that they both understand and believe what the Bible says about marriage, they both share the same high view of marriage! How important that they are fully committed to serving the Lord and his church faithfully!

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