



## Who Created Marriage?

*“Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain.”* (Psalm 127:1, NIV)

In a society where divorce is rampant and people are trying to redefine marriage, are you confused about marriage? Do you wonder if marriage includes just a man and woman, two men or two women (homosexuals), a man and many wives (polygamy) or just living together? Is it binding for a lifetime? Does it make any difference what you believe? Everyone can have an opinion, but in God’s eyes, it makes a lot of difference because he created marriage!

God often talks about marriage in the Bible. The Bible begins with the marriage of Adam and Eve (Genesis 2) and ends with the marriage of Jesus and his Church, called the Bride of Christ. (Revelation 19:1-10) One entire book in the Old Testament, *Song of Solomon*, is an intimate story of a man and a woman, of their love, courtship and marriage. In addition, Jesus chose a wedding to perform his first miracle of changing water into wine. When describing his relationship with the church, he used marriage as a living symbol. God definitely cares about marriages!

### ***Definition of marriage***

What is marriage? It is a man and woman making a promise before God, signing a legal covenant to live together for the rest of their lives. A sexual union, thereby becoming husband and wife, seals the marriage. Marriage was the first institution designed by God. It is sacred, legally binding and lasting for life. It is a declaration of commitment, fulfilled in the sexual union between one man and one woman, never between the same sexes. The husband and wife are a gift from God to each other to meet their mutual needs. The man and woman are of equal worth but with different roles and responsibilities in marriage. They are to glorify God and experience spiritual, emotional and physical intimacy, so the two can become one.

### ***The first marriage***

God planned carefully for the first couple. First, he created a fabulous home for them, the Garden of Eden – a perfect place for kids. Satisfied, God said, “This is good!”

All was ready. The time had come for the highlight of his creation. God said, *“Let us make a man – someone like ourselves, to be the master of all life upon the earth and in the skies and in the seas.”* (Genesis 1:26, LB) God took a little dust from the earth,

formed the lifeless body of a man and then breathed into him the breath of life. He was alive! Imagine that moment. Made in God's image, he would never be God, but in his inner person, he could reflect God's character of love, patience, kindness, forgiveness and faithfulness. So can you!

Then God saw that something was not good. Adam was *alone*. Why was that not good? Think of a time when you felt left out and alone. Did you think that was good? If it wasn't, did you know that it was because God created you to need love and fellowship? Just as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit have intimacy, unity, love, fellowship and oneness, he longs for every person to have that same relationship.

To make that kind of relationship possible, God caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep (first anesthesia) and removed one of Adam's ribs (first operation). From the rib, he shaped Eve in his own image to be Adam's support and helper. By making the woman from the man, God illustrated that in marriage man and woman become one flesh, a mystical union of oneness sealed and symbolized by sexual intercourse. Yes, sex is all God's idea!

When Adam woke up, God, the original Cupid, presented his beautiful bride to him. Listen to Adam's excitement: *"This is it! She is part of my own bone and flesh! Her name is 'woman' because she was taken out of man."* (Genesis 1:28, LB) (Later, he named her Eve, the mother of all people. Genesis 3:20) What a precious gift they were to each other! Adam now had a suitable helper. God blessed them and instructed them to produce children, fill the earth and rule over it. They were naked, unashamed and sinless.

### ***God's marriage instructions***

Now there were three in the Garden – God, Adam and Eve. Imagine the happiness and fellowship Adam and Eve must have experienced with God – walking and talking in the Garden. In the same way, God wants to be part of every marriage. As a believer, God says you must marry a believer. *"Don't team up with those who are unbelievers. How can goodness be a partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness?"* (2 Corinthians 6:14, NLT) Why? Because you will have different goals in life.

What other instructions did God give? *"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and shall become one flesh."* (Genesis 2:24, NIV) (Leaving his parents was easy for Adam!) God knows every couple needs to be alone to work out differences and establish their marriages. In the time of Moses, they actually excused a man from serving in the military and other responsibilities for a year. What couple would not love that?

Marriage is a lifetime commitment. Jesus said, *"Since they are no longer two but one, let no one separate them, for **God** has joined them together."* (Matthew 19:6, NLT) Unfortunately, many couples today go into marriage thinking, "If it doesn't work, I can get a divorce." Divorce should never be an option for resolving problems, and there will be problems!

Has the Lord made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. Do not break faith with the wife of your youth. I hate divorce. (Malachi 2:15, 16B, NIV))

As hurtful and destructive as a divorce is for a couple, children often suffer the most. God wants a secure, loving and godly home for his children. Children have rights!

Does Jesus ever permit divorce? Yes, when one spouse commits adultery and breaks the marriage covenant. (Read Matthew 9:1-11, NLT.) The hurt partner does not have to divorce, but can choose to forgive, reconcile and let God restore their marriage. Nothing is impossible with God! In addition, if an unbeliever in the marriage wants to leave, let him/her leave. (1 Corinthians 7:15) Sometimes, when there is abuse in a family, separation may be necessary for safety.

Does this life commitment seem harsh to you? When Jesus gave this teaching, the disciples exclaimed, “Then it is better not to marry!” His disciples knew that apart from the miracle of Jesus working in them, they could never love unconditionally and keep their commitment. Neither can you!

### ***God’s plan for you***

Knowing God’s design for marriage, do you understand why God’s enemy, Satan, does everything possible to deceive you about the meaning of sex and marriage, to tempt you to engage in sex before marriage? You may say, “I’ve already blown it!” If God forgave King David of adultery and murder, don’t you think he is ready to forgive you when you repent? With God’s help, you can make a fresh commitment to save yourself for your marriage partner. God wants the best for you.

Although you may be young, begin praying now for your future marriage partner. You can listen to the “snake” and his lies, or you can choose to step into God’s plan and blessing for you. To God, who created marriage, it makes a lot of difference. For you it will affect the rest of your life and any children you might have.

### **Attitude Check:**

- How has this devotional changed your attitude toward preparing for marriage?

### **Explore:**

- Read, “Divorce Is Not Part of God’s Plan” (Mark 10:2-12) and “Christ’s Love Sets the Standard” (Ephesians 5:2).

### **Talking with God:**

- Father, prepare me to be the person you want me to be for my future partner.