

The Pearl of the Epistles – Ephesians

God's Design for Marriage, Part III

Ephesians 5:30-33

***Ephesians 5:30-33** For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. **31** For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. **32** This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. **33** Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.*

Introduction

On the popular website “About.com Marriage” they have listed “Tips for a Long Lasting Marriage; Why Long Term Marriages Last” by Sheri & Bob Stritof¹. “In talking with couples who have been married for many years, these aspects of marriage (not listed in any type of priority) are listed as necessary for a long lasting marriage.”

- Create passion for life and for one another.
- Forgive one another. Don't hang on to past baggage and past hurts. Be willing to let go and to move forward with your lives.
- Continue to be committed to each other and celebrate your sense of commitment.
- Like one another and be friends with each other.
- Have fun together, laugh together, and use humor in healthy ways.
- Be open to compromise.
- Comfort, encourage, and affirm one another.
- Respect one another's need for privacy and space.
- Parent together.
- Deal with a crisis and adversity together.
- Fight fair.
- Accept your differences and don't try to change your spouse.
- Be able to stand on your own feet as a couple and not be dependent either financially or emotionally on either of your parents.
- Continue to build intimacy -- both sexually and emotionally -- throughout your marriage.
- Keep romance alive in your marriage.

¹ <http://marriage.about.com/od/longlasting/qt/longlastingtips.htm>

On tips for newlyweds (getwed.com) they complemented the list of tips with these:²

- Learn how to deal with conflict
- Discuss finances ASAP
- Accept your partners faults
- Explore each other's interests
- Set family/friend guidelines

Well that is what the world encourages for a long lasting marriage and they are a pretty good list at that. But, what does God say about marriage?

Intimacy – God's Way

Ecclesiology, is the doctrine of the Church. Simply defined

Ecclesiology is the study of the church in its constitution, ordinances, and activities, the last including both work and worship.³

Like the previous words of Paul, let us compare the marriage of the husband and wife to the Church and Christ.

Ephesians 5:30 *For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.*

Paul compares the intimacy of the husband and wife as they were created: woman was taken from the body of man and they became something special, *one flesh*; to that of the church and the body of Christ, "...*we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.*"

Genesis 2:23 *And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.*

Romans 12:5 *So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.*

1 Corinthians 12:27 *Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.*

Ephesians 4:11-12 *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

² <http://www.getwed.com/articles/10-relationship-tips-for-newlyweds-us-en/>

³ Emery H. Bancroft, *Christian Theology, Systematic and Biblical, Second Revised Edition*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981) 281

Obviously we are not members of His physical body. As Christians we are new creatures in Christ. Christ became human and died for the Church. He sustains and values the Church as if it is His own body.

The idea here is that when God created man on the sixth day, he created a close and intimate union between the husband and wife, they became “one” *physically*. In much the same way the union between the Christian and the Saviour is also a bond so inseparable that they may be spoken of as “one” *spiritually*.

Consequently we should understand and adopt His principle in our relationships with each other within His church (Rom 12:4–5; 1 Cor 12:12–27).⁴

Ephesians 5:31 *For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.*

This verse is a quote of Genesis 2:24 where God instituted marriage.

Genesis 2:24 *Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.*

For this cause – refers to the previous verse “*for we are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones.*” This phrase can be rendered “corresponding to this” point, husband and wife are to become one flesh. Jesus also referred to the relationship in Matthew 19:4-6.

Matthew 19:4-6 *And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, 5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? 6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*

God’s ideal of marriage is that two people become one. They are joined together in body, soul, and spirit. This does not mean that individual personalities are cast aside.

Adam and Eve are a figure of the future union of Christ and the church as Bridegroom and bride. We have reviewed the role of husband and wife; the wife is to submit to the husband and the husband is to love his wife.

⁴ Hindson, E. E., & Kroll, W. M. (Eds.). (1994). *KJV Bible Commentary* (p. 2425). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Note: There is a big distinction in the making of Eve than all other living creatures; she was formed from a rib of Adam. In the Hebrew the word for “man” is *ish* and for “woman” it is *isha*. The word is almost the same—she was taken out of man.

May I say that this relationship is lost on the world today? The relationship between man and woman as defined in the Bible is in direct contrast to the “new” morality and sexual freedom espoused by the world today. What the world is spewing concerning the relationship between a man and woman today is putting a lot of young people in slavery. It simply will not work. God’s ideal for marriage is meant for Christians to have a much deeper relationship than sexual intimacy and living together. God’s plan for marriage is on a much higher plane.

To miss the relationship of the Church to Jesus is to not understand what God holds for the husband and wife.

A husband and wife have a better chance for a successful marriage if there is some independence—physically, emotionally, and financially—from parents and in-laws.⁵

Relationship – God’s Way

Ephesians 5:32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

Mystery in the Old Testament means, “that which is hidden and still needs to be made known.”

In the NT *mystērion* signifies a secret which is being, or even has been, revealed, which is also divine in scope, and needs to be made known by God to men through his Spirit.⁶

John MacArthur states; “Marriage is a sacred reflection of the magnificent and beautiful mystery of union between the Messiah and His church, completely unknown until the NT.”⁷

In his book, “Ephesians”, Barton and Comfort give the idea that;

⁵ *King James Version study Bible* . (1997). (electronic ed., Eph 5:31). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁶ Smalley, S. S. (1996). *Mystery*. In (D. R. W. Wood, I. H. Marshall, A. R. Millard, J. I. Packer, & D. J. Wiseman, Eds.)*New Bible dictionary*. Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

⁷ MacArthur, J., Jr. (Ed.). (1997). *The MacArthur Study Bible* (electronic ed., p. 1813). Nashville, TN: Word Pub.

“This is a great mystery” might better be translated, “There is a profound truth hidden here.” As Paul contemplated the mutual love and loyalty, loving headship of the husband and loving submission of the wife, riches bestowed, intimacy and oneness, and self-sacrifice that should describe every marriage, he saw in these a picture of *Christ and the church*.⁸

Obedience – God’s Way

Ephesians 5:33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

Nevertheless – Paul picks back up his narrative of Ephesians 5:21-29 after digressing a little.

“...let every one of you” – As is usual with Paul, he now summarizes his teaching. He directs the attention back to the subject of “God’s Design for Marriage”. He now reverses the order in which he presented his case: Husband first and wife second.

“...so love his wife even as himself” – This is the bedrock truth of the marriage. This is the core reality to a successful and God honoring marriage – husbands love your wives and treat her as you treat yourself. Everything in God’s ideal marriage hinges on this premise. If the husband will love his wife in the way that Christ loves the Church, all will be right. But, the opposite is also true; if the husband does not love his wife like Christ loves the church, all else will fail in the marriage.

“...and the wife see that she reverence her husband” – The fallout of the husband loving his wife is that the wife will naturally respect her husband and submission becomes a non-issue in the relationship. And the opposite is true; where the wife does not respect/reverence her husband, there is no willing submission on her part.

I wonder today how many marriages could be made healthy and strong if both husband and wife would simply submit to God’s plan for marriage. Would we see healthy marriages and families?

⁸ Barton, B. B., & Comfort, P. W. (1996). *Ephesians* (p. 118). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

Conclusion

Intimacy – God’s Way

Relationship – God’s Way

Obedience – God’s Way

The relationship between a Christian husband and wife should stand in stark contrast to the worldly relationship between husband and wife. The Christian marriage should be the showcase of God’s intention for the family.

If the wife submits/respects/reverences her husband in God’s design, would we see:

- A lasting and faithful lifelong commitment to him and her marriage?

And if a husband agape/loves his wife in God’s design, would we see:

- A lasting and faithful lifelong commitment to her and his marriage?
- Love of his wife as much as he loves himself?
- Insures that there is unity in the relationship?
- Provides for the material, financial and spiritual needs of his family?
- Treats his wife with respect?

Robert C. Crowder