

Embracing God's Design for Marriage

Part 1

I. Foundations for Biblical Marriage.

1. Understand how we got here:

a. Man and woman are created in God's image.
Gen 1:26-27

b. Man and woman sinned against God and are separated from God by their sin.
Gen 3; Isaiah, 59:2; Rom 6:23; Eph 2:1-3

c. Man and woman are hopeless in and of themselves to be what God desires.
Isaiah 64:6; John 14:6

d. I have hope for my marriage because I have hope in Jesus
Eph 2:10; Titus 2:14, 3:8; I Peter 3:13

e. The institution of marriage is good.
Gen 2:18, 23-24; Prov 18:22; Ephesians 5:21

2. Understand God's design for Men and Women

a. Spiritual equality yet role differentiation

Old Testament: Spiritual Equality

Genesis 1:26-27; 3:16-19. Both man and woman are created in the image of God. Neither one has more or less of God's image. Man and woman are both equally totaled by sin (neither one is more sinful than the other).

Old Testament: Role Differentiation

Genesis 2:18 (I Cor 11; I Tim 2)

God created man first, then woman. God had an order in mind when He created and this order is linked to their different roles. God both instructs and confronts the first human pair through the man. The order God has designed is linked to our roles but NOT our spiritual equality. The order does not diminish our spiritual equality, it enhances and promotes our roles.

Jesus: Spiritual Equality

Jesus dramatically emphasized a woman's spiritual equality with man in the midst of a woman-demeaning Greek, Roman, and even Jewish culture. Jesus used illustrations and images familiar to and useful for women, Mt 13:33; 24:41; Lk 13:20-21; 15:8-10. Jesus also revealed Himself as Messiah to women, Jn 4:25-26. Jesus taught women directly, Lk 10:38-42. Jesus touched women and allowed them to touch Him, Lk 8:43-48; 13:10-17. Jesus allowed women to travel with Him and His disciples, Lk 8:1-3. After His resurrection Jesus revealed Himself first to a woman, Jn 20:1-18. All of this is culturally unprecedented!

Jesus: Role differentiation:

Jesus did nothing to exalt women to a place of spiritual leadership over men. If ever there was a time to correct the prior teaching and practice in regards to role differentiation – it was at this time through this Man! But Jesus didn't. Rather, Jesus affirms what revelation has already taught – that women are spiritually equal with men before God (in fact He elevated this out of the culturally sinful view of His day). Jesus also affirmed the God-given role differentiation from the older Testament.

The rest of the New Testament Spiritual equality:

Women are spiritual equals with men in redemption. Gender was not taken into account when God designed and carried out redemption through Jesus' atoning work (Gal 3:28). Women shared in the struggle of advancing the gospel with Paul (Phil 4:2-3). Wives were to be viewed by their Christian husbands as "fellow heirs of the grace of life" (1 Pt 3:7).

The rest of the New Testament Role differentiation:

Paul, under no less inspiration of the Holy Spirit than in the preceding verses, defines different roles for men and women both in the church and in the Christian home, 1 Cor 11:1-16; 14:34-36; 1 Tim 2:8-15; Eph 5:22-33; Col 3:18-21; 1 Pt 3:1-7.

As sinful genders who have come to taste God's glory and life transforming work through the cross of Jesus, we see something beautiful and exalted in our biblical manhood and womanhood. We embrace the spiritual equality AND the role differentiation given us from our sovereign God. Why? God has something to reveal about Himself through BOTH our spiritual equality AND our role differentiation. For instance, man and woman (2) gives to us a simpler picture of who our Triune (3 in 1) God is. There is spiritual equality within the Godhead but role differentiation between Members as well (1 Cor. 11:3). We are eager that God be seen within our church family and our nuclear families as we rejoice in our spiritual equality at the cross as well as obediently embrace these distinct roles He has given us.

-The Biblical roles for husbands and wives (Ephesians 5:22-33)

Husbands:

Wives:

3. Understand God's Purpose for Marriage

a. His own glory (I Cor 10:31)

b. Companionship (Gen 2:18)

Married couples should:

Spend time together

Seek to understand and care for one another

Appreciate one another

Prioritize each other more compared to others

Be transparent with one another

c. Service of one another (Ephesians 5:22-33)

Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. Eph 5:25 -Showing self-giving love in all things.

A wife is to be a helper for her husband in this life.

Worker in the home (Titus 2:4-5)

Prayer

Encouragement

Support

Respectful and loving admonishment

Shepherding and training children

Wife, when was the last time you asked your husband, "How can I help/assist you today?"

Husbands: Remember that your wife is not only a helper. She is also a companion. Women also have responsibilities to their relationship with God, children, and the church (Col 2:6-7; Prov 31:10-31; Titus 2:3-5; I Peter 4:10). Husbands, when was the last time you asked, "How have I enabled my wife to fulfill her God-given responsibilities?"

d. Characterization of Christ and the Church (Eph 5:25-30)

The marriage relationship is to be a characterization or picture of Christ and His people. The Gospel is to be put on display through biblical marriages. The husbands love is to imitate Christ's sacrificial love on the cross. The wife's submission to her husband is to demonstrate the church's eager submission to Christ.

What picture does your marriage currently present to a watching world?

e. Marital intimacy

To be "One Flesh" Gen 2:24

I Cor 7:3-5; Hebrews 13:4

f. Procreation (Gen 1:27-28)

Discussion Questions for Husbands and Wives

1. In what ways does our marriage reflect spiritual equality?
2. In what ways does our marriage reflect roll differentiation?
3. What areas of our marriage are strongest?
4. What areas of our marriage do you think need the most growth?
5. Each of you rate your marriage on the following:

Note: Give an explanation as to why you gave your relationship the rating you did. Discuss your assessments together.

a. Glorifying God

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

b. Companionship

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

c. Service of one another

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

d. Characterization of Christ and the Church

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

e. Marital intimacy

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10