

# Back to Square 1

## Building a Marriage--part 1

October 18, 2015

### **DAY 1: What are your assumptions about marriage.**

1. Getting started on the right foot makes a difference. When we start off on the wrong foot, we may not see the consequences immediately, but they will show up over time.

2. When people get married they marry with a set of assumptions. As you read through this list, jot down your thoughts under each question.

- a. What is marriage?
- b. Is it God-ordained or is it just a social institution?
- c. Is there a design to marriage, or do you make your own design?
- d. Is marriage really "til death do us part?"
- e. Does gender matter? If so, how?
- f. What makes for intimacy?
- g. What's the greatest threat to a marriage?
- h. What's the greatest solution to problems in marriage?
- i. How much "work" does marriage take?
- j. What happens if we "fall out of love?"
- k. What role(s) is sex supposed to play in a marriage? What role(s) can't it play?

2. What struck you most from these questions?

## DAY 2: Investigating the design of marriage--part 1

1. Let's begin an investigation into the design of marriage. The underpinnings go all the way back to Adam, but before Eve. The design of marriage is also predicated on the design of what makes us human.

*Genesis 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*

2. What do we learn from Genesis 1:27?

a. We are *made* in the *image of God*. We are made for personal relationships, to both give and receive love that is more than just what we see in the animal kingdom.

b. We are also *made gendered*. We are not just male or female-bodied. We are "maled" or "femaled" souls! There is something different about us, given at our conception that is just as personal as being made in God's image. Though it may not "feel" that way to some, our gender is just as hard-wired into us as our DNA.

*Genesis 2:18 The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."*

4. There are some that say that the human problem is loneliness. But that is not the case, as we'll see.

5. Adam was in constant fellowship with God. "Loneliness" was not a problem. Being "alone" was a problem. What was God's solution? (Gen. 2:18)

6. Being a "*helper suitable for him*" gives us two more indicators of God's design in marriage.

a. "**Helper**" is much more than "assistant" or "aide." Maybe you can think of it as a set of corresponding strengths that come along and "help" us overcome our own gendered weaknesses.

b. "...*suitable for him*" means complimentary, as in "completing" the other half. "Complementary" gender means that each gender needs the other in a way that is "suitable" to the other. (We will explore this in much greater detail later in our marriage series).

7. What strikes you most from today's devotional?

### DAY 3: Investigating the design of marriage--part 2

*Genesis 1:28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."*

1. God blessed them. He blessed their union.

2. Now God gives them two big **social mandates**. (In our western culture, marriage has been "dumbed down" to a private affair, "my marriage," or "my marriage is private." Marriage wasn't designed as a private matter, nor does it work well as a private matter. It needs a bigger context than just "our fulfillment.")

3. Opposite gender plays the key role in the **first social mandate**.

*... Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth ...*

4. We are obviously gendered physiologically. Each gender is needed in fulfilling this mandate.

5. The "process" of fulfilling this social mandate is, of course, wondrous. God's design sets up a glorious event! In the "fulfilling" of this mandate, man and woman find the process "fulfilling!" It is an incredible expression of love that at the same time deepens the commitment of man to woman (We'll explore this in week 8 of our series).

6. The first mandate necessitates husband and wife becoming a team in creating and raising children, of teaching and shaping the next generation of children to develop this world.

7. The **second social mandate** of marriage is ...

*... (fill the earth) and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.*

8. The next few verses tell us that all of creation is a gift to human beings. It is to be used for their blessing and fulfilling of their mandates. We have a duty not just to "use" the earth but to "care" for it.

*Genesis 1:29 Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.*

*<sup>30</sup> And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground--everything that has the breath of life in it--I give every green plant for food." And it was so.*

9. Husband and wife are to use their complimentary gender as a team in their social mandates.

#### **DAY 4: Investigating the design of marriage--part 3**

*Malachi 2:14* You ask, "Why?" It is because the LORD is acting as the witness between you and the wife of your youth, because **you have broken faith with her**, though she is your partner, the wife of **your marriage covenant**.

<sup>15</sup> Has not **the LORD made them one**? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why **one**? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and **do not break faith** with the wife of your youth.

<sup>16</sup> "I hate divorce," says the LORD God of Israel, ... So guard yourself in your spirit, and **do not break faith**.

1. Today, we'll highlight another design piece of marriage: one man, one woman **for life**.
2. The design of marriage includes a marriage "**covenant**." It is a "contract" for life. This is why the marriage ceremony includes vows that end, "until death do us part."
3. In the time of Malachi, the people were not taking their marriage covenant seriously. Instead they were "breaking faith" with their spouse. How many times does God mention this as a problem?
4. What is the remedy for "breaking faith?" (Look in verse 16).
5. Another picture of one man, one woman **for life** is in verse 15. "*The Lord made them one.*"
6. There is a divine element in the development of a marriage toward **oneness**. Making two people into "one" is a daunting task. We're all just so darned self-centered. The process of becoming one is a lifetime project.
7. Though God makes "allowances" for divorce, God hates it. It is so painful, not only for spouses but also for the children of divorce, extended family and friends.
8. What is your biggest takeaway from today's devotional?

## DAY 5: Investigating the design of marriage--part 4

Genesis 2:23 *The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man."*

<sup>24</sup> *For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and **be united** to his wife, and they will become **one flesh**.* <sup>25</sup> *The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.*

1. Here is highlighted the oneness factor.

*Eph. 5:31-32 A man shall leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. **This is a profound mystery**...*

2. Paul, in Ephesians quotes the Genesis verses and adds an observation at the end.

3. "Profound mystery" in the Greek is "mega mysterion." "Mysterion" is not some esoteric idea only a few enlightened will understand. "Mysterion" is a wondrous truth, amazing in every aspect. What is the "mega mystery?"

*Eph. 5:32... but **I am talking about Christ and the church**.*

*Eph. 5:25 Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.*

4. Here's the great secret: thru the gospel, we get both the **power** and **the pattern** for the building a marriage.

5. The sacrificial love Jesus showed us is the model for a growing marriage. Marriage is **not** about what I'm going to "get" out of marriage. Marriage is about what I'm going to "give" in my marriage. The grand paradox is that when my "real" purpose in marriage is what I'm going to get, I won't get it. When my "real" purpose is to give, I will find the power and pattern to build a marriage.

6. If you're married, you fight the same urge we all fight--"What about my needs?!!!"

7. God uses this reality to reveal your deeper hunger for something no spouse can give you. You can only find your deepest needs in Jesus, the One who gave Himself up for you!

8. From this weeks' devotionals, what idea(s) about marriage most stayed with you?