

Marriage Sexuality

Grace and Truth—part 18

August 20, 2023

The Bible virtually begins with a wedding, and it ends with a wedding in Revelation (Christ and the Church). Marriage is God's idea, starting with person # 1 and #2, Adam and Eve. God is the designer of marriage. Understanding that design is crucial.

DAY 1: The design of sex for marriage

1. For millennia there was a universal definition of marriage, not including some crazy offshoots. How do you define marriage in this day? There is a *legal* answer. There is a *theological* answer.

Marriage is a covenant between one man and one woman for life,
with the potential to bring new life.

2. But defining marriage in abstract or legal terms is like trying to explain the wonder of a sunset to a blind person. There is more to marriage than the rational answer to what is marriage.

3. What is missing? Lots of things! The design of marriage, the purpose of marriage, the wonder of marriage, what we learn about the Trinity in marriage, why complimentary gender is critical to marriage, the kind of love it takes to build a marriage, why a covenant is necessary, why monogamy is essential, why vows are vital to build a marriage, as well as examples from the bible that illustrate how complimentary gender is supposed to work.

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

4. We *are* created, *made* in the image of God and we *are* gendered. We are not just a person with sexual apparatus. We are as gendered as we are a person. We are gendered just as much as we are made in the image of God.

5. Unlike secular culture, the bible does not separate gender and sex. They are one in the same.

We are gendered, down into the very core of our being.

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 in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Genesis 2:22 Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib^x he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.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."

²⁴ *That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and **they become one flesh.***²⁵ *Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.*

"One flesh" is both the goal of marriage and an illustration of marriage.

6. God intends a couple to continue to grow in closeness, to the extent of two people "becoming one." And the sexual relationship illustrates this very point. Husband and wife approach each other as individual people and bodies, but unite sexually, illustrating the purpose of marriage.

7. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 2: Marital roles illustrated by sex

Ephesians 5:22 Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

*Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, , **love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her** ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸ In this same way, **husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies**. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they **feed and care** for their body, just as Christ does the church.*

Eph. 5:30 ...for we are members of his body. ³¹ “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” ³² This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

1. In this passage, Paul speaks of both the husband and wife relationship AND the Christ and the church relationship so closely, that the overlap of the two is amazing. And, each of these two relationships both instruct and illustrate the other relationship!

2. The Christ and His church relationship:

a. Jesus saw our need. He sacrificed His place in heaven, and His earthly life for our benefit, because He loves us.

b. In turn, the church is to respond with affection and devotion. The effect of both is to create a love relationship between God and His people.

3. The husband and wife relationship:

a. The man initiates a love that is other-centered, willing to sacrifice for his wife. It usually does not involve his physical life but he is called upon to sacrifice everyday—relationally, time, money, emotionally, interest, attention, pride, for the benefit of his wife. Why? Because that’s what Christ did for us.

b. The wife is called upon to respond with a love that is also other-centered, that is willing to join, encourage, partner, and receive a husband’s initiating love, warmly.

4. The sexual act, itself, is an illustration of this very dynamic!

a. A man takes the initiative to offer himself to his wife. He moves strongly to her, both relationally and sexually, to communicate his delight in her, loves her person and body, and penetrates her soul and body with tenderness.

b. A wife is designed to warmly receive a husband’s loving initiative, wrapping herself around his strong initiative, creating physical and emotional oneness.

5. What strikes you from today’s devotional?

DAY 3: The wonder of eros love

1. Marriage teaches us that the kind of love that got us married is **not** the same kind of love that will keep us married, let alone build a marriage that has strength and beauty to it over a lifetime.

2. Most of us got married because of romantic love. But we will need two other kinds of love to build a marriage. The first is agape love; the second is eros love.

3. “**Agape**” – other-centered love. This is a love that is more interested in giving than getting. It is willing to sacrifice itself for the sake of another.

Relationships have a way of exposing our self-centeredness that is shocking to us. God intends to deal with our self-centeredness and building

4. “**Eros**” – passionate, emotional, sexual love, but not by itself. The sex addict may be involved sexually more than anyone, but it is eventually empty because it is robbed of its relational meaning. Why?

Eventually, lust robs of eros of its very passion.

5. Eros that is directed outwardly, intent on filling the “love tank” of your spouse, has the power to fill both love tanks. Other-centered eros is the second kind of love needed to grow a marriage. If you wait to feel the passion before you give eros, you will deprive your spouse, you, and your marriage of passion. It will slowly dwindle away.

6. The wonder of this design and experience is seen in the following Proverbs.

Proverbs 30:18 There are three things that are too amazing for me, four that I do not understand: ¹⁹ the way of an eagle in the sky, the way of a snake on a rock, the way of a ship on the high seas, and the way of a man with a young woman.

7. There is one unique love meant only for your spouse: erotic. It is the most sacred love for the most sacred relationship and sacred act. To share that love with more than one is devastating.

8. If taken on too early it can decimate someone. Wrongly taken as adults, it can cause an immense enormity of pain and heartache.

9. Marital eros is meant to take us to the height of ecstasy and depths of intimacy. It is so powerful that it can create new life!

10. What strikes you from today’s devotional?

DAY 4: The wonder of marital sex (other-centered eros)

1. The book of Song of Songs is a collection of love poems between a husband and his wife. It beautifully celebrates romantic and physical love.

2. Instead of trying to “explain” agape love and eros love, we’ll let the biblical book, Song of Solomon draw you in.

Song of Songs 1:1 Solomon’s Song of Songs

She

² Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth—for your love is more delightful than wine.

³ Pleasing is the fragrance of your perfumes; your name is like perfume poured out. No wonder the young women love you! ⁴ Take me away with you—let us hurry! Let the king bring me into his chambers.

Friends

We rejoice and delight in you; we will praise your love more than wine.

She

How right they are to adore you! ⁵ Dark am I, yet lovely, daughters of Jerusalem, dark like the tents of Kedar, like the tent curtains of Solomon. ⁶ Do not stare at me because I am dark, because I am darkened by the sun. My mother’s sons were angry with me and made me take care of the vineyards; my own vineyard I had to neglect. ⁷ Tell me, you whom I love, where you graze your flock and where you rest your sheep at midday. Why should I be like a veiled woman beside the flocks of your friends?

Friends

⁸ If you do not know, most beautiful of women, follow the tracks of the sheep and graze your young goats by the tents of the shepherds.

He

⁹ I liken you, my darling, to a mare among Pharaoh’s chariot horses. ¹⁰ Your cheeks are beautiful with earrings, your neck with strings of jewels. ¹¹ We will make you earrings of gold, studded with silver.

She

¹² While the king was at his table, my perfume spread its fragrance. ¹³ My beloved is to me a sachet of myrrh resting between my breasts. ¹⁴ My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blossoms from the vineyards of En Gedi.

He

¹⁵ How beautiful you are, my darling! Oh, how beautiful! Your eyes are doves.

She

¹⁶ How handsome you are, my beloved! Oh, how charming! And our bed is verdant.

He

2:2 *Like a lily among thorns is my darling among the young women.*

She

³ *Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest*

is my beloved among the young men. I delight to sit in his shade, and his fruit is sweet to my taste.

⁴ *Let him lead me to the banquet hall, and let his banner over me be love.*

⁵ *Strengthen me with raisins, refresh me with apples, for I am faint with love.* ⁶ *His left arm is under my head, and his right arm embraces me.*

3. This kind of love doesn't just "happen". It has to be built. Agape love has to be built, and so does other-centered eros love have to be built.

4. Self-centered "love" is not love at all, but slowly drains the marriage of eros, agape, and romance.

5. What strikes you from today's devotion?

DAY 5: The wonder of God's story illustrated by marital sex

Our sexuality is a window into the deepest mysteries of life and God.

1. There is only one area where Adam's body doesn't make sense by itself. There is only one area of Eve's body that doesn't make sense by itself. Every cell in our bodies has 46 chromosomes, except for one. Sperm have 23 chromosomes; ovum has 23 chromosomes.

"...and the two became one flesh."

2. God is one God and three distinct persons. God (singular) said "Let us (plural) make man in our image..."

3. What does it mean that God is love? The Trinity is an on-going dance of love, the dance of Trinity, one lavishing love upon another. We are created to share in the love He has.

4. How do two (male and female) reflect three? Male and female won't be two for very long! The incomplete chromosomes of the sperm meet the incomplete chromosomes of the ovum, and a baby occurs.

The problem of lust

"Love has been replaced by lust." – Pope John Paul

5. How does self destroy eros through lust?

a. Eros is no longer directed outwardly. It is now directed inwardly. Eros was once selfless, now it is selfish, the love of self. God's rules no longer apply. Only the rule of self applies.

b. Love's exploration has been replaced by lust's exploitation.

c. God sets the rule of love. I set the rule of lust. My lust must be satisfied.

d. What was once created to be our greatest joy becomes the source of its greatest ruin. Nothing is more powerful than erotic love. Nothing is more destructive than lust's exploitation.

Eros redeemed!

6. We ruined eros. God uses eros to rescue eros.

Gen. 3:15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

7. God is going to crush Satan through the coming seed of a woman! Sex is going to be used to win redemption. Countless male/female interactions are going to bring about the Messiah.

8. But Satan seeks to destroy the coming seed. Key points of the redemptive story involve barrenness. Remember the "God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob." Satan tried to stop the story line of redemption through barrenness: Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel!

9. But God protected the coming seed.

God's eros (passionate love) for His people illustrated

Hosea 2:14 "Therefore I am now going to allure her; I will lead her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her. ¹⁵ There I will give her back her vineyards, and will make the Valley of Achor a door of hope.

There she will respond ^o as in the days of her youth, as in the day she came up out of Egypt.

¹⁶ "In that day," declares the LORD, "you will call me 'my husband'; ...

¹⁹ I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion. ²⁰ I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge the LORD."

10. God uses the language of our greatest experience of love to describe how He loves us! It is the language engagement and marriage.

11. What strikes you from today's devotional?