

The Principles Of Marriage Genesis 2:24-25

Rupert Bentley Taylor

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Here are the principles of marriage for all humanity.

For this reason...

1) principles of marriage are rooted in the **design and purpose of God**: v24 stands in light of what is described previously: God's creation of man & then woman from man, bringing her to man, as one like him & yet different from him, called to serve God with him as a helper alongside in the great task of ruling over God's creation. But God did not then stand back to see how Ad & Eve would work things out: marriage is given, designed & framed by God. We don't need to experiment with marriage to see how it might work: we learn from God how it will work.

2) principles of marriage are **given at the very beginning of creation**, before first marriage, before sin entered the world, before cultures developed. Marriage is a creation ordinance, laid down by God for all humans from the beginning. This should give us a special respect for marriage. Heb 13:4 'Marriage should be honoured by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral'.

3) principles of marriage are **affirmed by Jesus & the apostles**. It is to Gen 2:24 Jesus in Matt 19 & Mark 10 and Paul in 1 Cor 6 & Ephesians 5 turn to explain marriage both in the context of Jewish culture & Gentile culture.

1. A man will leave his father and mother.

1) **A new priority**: God places us in family: parents are in a position of authority over & care for their children. The mother with the father takes a special place of precedence in the child's life. But marriage requires **a leaving**. It is the man who now takes the headship in the new relationship. This departure is less to do with physical departure than with emotional & psychological priority. A **new unit** of care & responsibility, of headship & belonging is formed. And that new relationship has a prior claim to all others. This does not represent the end of the significance of relationship with parents nor does it mean that the couple no longer need any other relationships. But no other relationship has same priority or must ever threaten the obligations the man & woman have to each other.

2) **A public event**: even here at its most restricted in Gen 2:24 it involves 4 people. But of course it will involve many more too. In OT & NT such wedding events are regularly referred to. Always a public not a private matter. Jesus himself participated in such an event as recorded in John 2.

2. And be united to his wife.

This word could be translated hold fast to, cling to or be committed to. Combines passion and permanence. **Wholehearted**: set in context of utter delight of Adam in the woman God had formed v23. It is exuberant commitment to another person. **Permanent**: it is also solemn,

uncompromising, unequivocal, unending. There are 2 other notable examples of this word being used in OT. It is how the Israelites are commanded to treat God. Dt 10:20 'Fear the LORD yr God and serve him. Hold fast to him'. Not a temporary allegiance to the LORD, but permanent. In same way used of how the Israelites were to treat land given as their inheritance. Numb 36:7 'Every Israelite shall keep/cling to the tribal land inherited from his forefathers'. It is a word that describes what goes in a covenant, a solemn & binding commitment made before God and man. Several times marriage is described in OT as a covenant. See Prov 2:17, or Malachi 2:15 'The LORD is acting as the witness between you & the wife of your youth because you have broken faith with her, though she is the wife of your marriage covenant'. Marriage involves a joyful & permanent commitment.

3. And they will become one flesh.

1) Done to them: expression is passive, it is God's doing. God is involved. Mal 2:15 says 'Has not the LORD made them one?' Jesus underlines this: Mt 19:6 'They are no longer two but one. What God has joined together let man not separate'.

2) Endorses the place of sexual union: God has designed us as sexual beings. But he has also he has designed the context for the proper expression of sexual desire. This sexual union takes place between a man & his wife v24: it is **exclusively heterosexual**. Also **exclusively in the context of a marriage** commitment, a leaving & an abiding commitment, which then leads to a physical union. This is God's provision & design for our good.

3) Creates a new lasting unity: more than temporary sexual union : they become one flesh from that time on. It is a union of persons from then on. Man and woman began as one v.22 but now in marriage v24 they are united again. Jesus says 'they are no longer two but one'. Paul says in Eph 5 'Husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself'.

4) Creates the context for children: in 1:28 God had commanded man & woman to be fruitful and multiply. Now we see that children are intended to live with parents who are in this committed unique, relationship to each other. Mal 2:15 says 'Has not the LORD made them one? In flesh and in spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring'. God's design is that children should have parents who care for them & instruct them in the truth about God and model for them faithful commitment to each other & to God.

5) Yet children are not mentioned: the full stop at end of v24 is v imp. Though sexual union is designed normally to result in children being born, marriage is not defined by children. Marriage is complete without children.

The man and his wife were both naked & they felt no shame. v25

This is the last glimpse of the perfect world God had made without a shadow upon it. Here was the utter excellence of man & woman together in perfect ease with each other & God in his wonderful garden.

But we live **the far side of chapter 3**. The very first casualty of sin is the scene in Gen 2: 25. See 3:7 & 10. Now they were no longer at ease with ourselves, with each other & with God. That where we are and there is no way back to Eden. But there is a way on. What does this tragic couple need after Genesis 3? They need someone who will choose to love them despite the worst about them, who will take responsibility for them and do whatever it takes & pay what ever its costs to reconcile them and change them from within. They need someone to whom in a broken world they can fully trust & yield themselves to their care

without reservation. That's what they need. That's what you & I need. That's what marriage represents. Marriage is not an end in itself. God does not intend that everyone should be married, the most perfectly fulfilled Man, Jesus Christ, was never married, and every marriage ends permanently at death: there will be no marriage in heaven. But what marriage points to is eternal.

Christian marriage is a representation of the gospel. See Ephesians 5. The role of the husband reflects Christ, and the role of the wife reflects the church. Paul & Jesus call us back to Gen 2:24. They do not settle for what OT regulated because of the hardness of men's hearts, divorce, remarriage, polygamy & all the pain surrounds those things: 'it was not this way from the beginning', Jesus says in Mt 19:8. None of those belong to the design. Jesus & Paul call us to live Gen 2:24. Yet when Paul quotes Gen 2:24, in Eph 5:31, Paul says v32 'This is a profound mystery- but I am talking about Christ and the church'. As John Piper puts it: 'The ultimate meaning of marriage is the representation of the covenant-keeping love between Christ and his church. To live this truth and to show this truth is what it means, most deeply to be married'. Our marriages are declarations of the gospel. They point to a love so great that guilty people may find forgiven because the penalty is paid & a submission to Christ so rewarding that it is the very essence of life itself. Our marriages now are previews of a greater marriage that we who believe will all share in: see Revelation 19:6-9.