



### **Introduction**

In God’s plans and purposes for men and women, He gave to us the institution of marriage. Although the original image of marriage (union between God & Man and Man & Woman) was marred by sin, it is restored in Christ. Through the Gospel, God and Man are reconciled. It is then in marriage, where the reconciliation of man and woman is demonstrated, that the relationship between Christ and His Church is pictured. While God has divinely purposed for Christian marriage to picture this union, He has also intended marriage for several practical purposes.

**Main Point:** God has given the gift of marriage to humanity in order that men and women might together fulfill His \_\_\_\_\_, know His \_\_\_\_\_, and be conformed ever more to His \_\_\_\_\_.

### **What is the Purpose of Marriage?**

“...God has designed marriage to be a covenantal, sexual, procreative, lifelong union of one man and one woman, as husband and wife, and is meant to signify the covenant love between Christ and his bride the church.”

—The Nashville Statement on Biblical Sexuality (AD 2017)

### **God’s Design for Marriage**

“...[Marriage] is an honourable estate, instituted in the time of man’s innocency, signifying the mystical union between Christ and his Church; which holy estate Christ adorned and beautified with his presence, and first miracle that he wrought, in Cana of Galilee, and is commended of Saint Paul to be honourable among all men: and therefore is not by any to be [entered into], nor taken in hand, unadvisedly, lightly, or wantonly, to satisfy men’s carnal lusts and appetites, like brute beasts that have no understanding; but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God; duly considering the causes for which [Marriage] was ordained.”

—The Book of Common Prayer (AD 1662)

#### **1. God intends marriage to be the context in which \_\_\_\_\_ are both conceived and reared.**

“First, [marriage] was ordained for the procreation of children, to be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, and to the praise of His holy name.”

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Gen. 1:28a—*And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion*

Gen. 2:24—*Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.*

Eph. 6:4 —*Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*

**Key Point:** Through their union, husband and wife are to \_\_\_\_\_ produce heirs and to \_\_\_\_\_ produce worshipers.

#### **2. God intends marriage to be the context in which a husband and wife experience mutual \_\_\_\_\_ as well as \_\_\_\_\_ from sin through their sexual union.**

“Secondly, it was ordained for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication; that such persons as have not the gift of continency might marry, and keep themselves undefiled members of Christ’s body.”

Song 7:6,10—<sup>6</sup>*How beautiful and pleasant you are, O loved one, with all your delights!...<sup>10</sup> I am my beloved’s, and his desire is for me.*

Prov. 5:18-19—<sup>18</sup>*Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, <sup>19</sup>a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her... fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love.*

1 Cor. 7:2-5—<sup>2</sup>*But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. <sup>3</sup>The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. <sup>4</sup>For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. <sup>5</sup>Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.*

### **Observations**

1. Both men and woman face the temptation to \_\_\_\_\_ as we live in a fallen world.

2. Sexual union in marriage is to involve a mutual \_\_\_\_\_ to one another.

“conjugal rights”—ὀφειλή (*opheilē*)—“A positive duty or obligation. Indebtedness which precedes partially from the relation to God, partly from the given facts of creation, and partly from the divine Law...”

“give”

3. The basis for the exhortation is the nature of marriage and what it means to be a husband or wife.

“deprive”

4. The union between husband and wife is intended to \_\_\_\_\_ them in order that they might resist the devil.

**Key Point:** Because they are a \_\_\_\_\_ to one another from God, they are to \_\_\_\_\_ themselves continually to one another.

**3. God intends marriage to be a relationship a mutual \_\_\_\_\_ and ongoing growth throughout all of the various seasons of life.**

“Third, it was ordained for the mutual society, help, and comfort, that the one ought to have the other, both in prosperity and adversity.”  
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Col. 3:8-9—<sup>18</sup> *Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.* <sup>19</sup> *Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.*

1 Pet. 3:1,7—<sup>1</sup> *Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands...* <sup>7</sup> *Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way*  
“be subject” “an understanding way”

**Key Point:** As a husband and wife seek to honor Christ in how they function together in their marriage, they will experience God’s ongoing work of \_\_\_\_\_ in their lives.

## **Challenges to the Truth:**

**1. The modern notion of “\_\_\_\_\_.”**

“Indeed, the myths we load into weddings almost doom marriages to fail. Weddings are centered around the romantic “coupling” of two star-crossed lovers, as if marriage was an extended exercise of staring deep into one another’s eyes—with benefits. But even then, my spouse is one who sees me, will meet my needs, will fulfill my wants, will “complete me.” Even our romantic coupling becomes a form of self-love.” —James K.A. Smith, “Marriage for the Common Good”

⇒ The view that a marriage is a relationship based on romance and is an \_\_\_\_\_ unto itself, is the basis for all of the aberrant forms of marriage (and other kinds of relationships) that have arisen in our day.

“A man and woman schooled in pride cannot simply sit down together and start caring. It takes humility to look wide-eyed at somebody else, to praise, to cherish, to honor. They will have to acquire some before they can succeed. For as long as it lasts, of course, the first throes of romantic love will usually exhort it from them, but when the initial wonder fades and familiarity begins to hobble biology, it’s going to take virtue to bring it off.” —Robert Capon, *Bed & Board*

⇒ To submit ourselves to our \_\_\_\_\_ more than to the \_\_\_\_\_ of Scripture will inevitably lead us to misunderstand God’s design for Christian marriage and to miss out on its intended blessings.

**2. The Rejection of the Biblical \_\_\_\_\_ Within Marriage.**

“Our mistake here, as elsewhere, is to think that equality and diversity are unreconcilable. The common notion of equality is based on the image of the march. In a parade, really unequal beings are dressed alike, given guns of identical length, trained to hold them at the same angle, and ordered to keep step with a fixed beat. But it is not the parade that is true to life; it is the dance. There you have real equals assigned unequal roles in order that each may achieve his individual perfection in the whole. Nothing is less personal than a parade; nothing more so than a dance. It is the choice image of fulfillment through function, and it comes very close to the heart of [God]...Keep that paradox and you move in the freedom of the Dance; alter it and you grow weary with marching.”  
—Robert Capon, *Bed & Board*

⇒ God’s design for the roles within marriage is intended for His \_\_\_\_\_ and our \_\_\_\_\_.

## **Concluding Thought**

• **God’s intent is for the \_\_\_\_\_ purposes of Christian marriage to \_\_\_\_\_ its divine purpose.**

“Christian worship is a celebration, and an enactment, of the marriage of Christ and His church. In some ways, it is still a betrothal, for the full consummation awaits Christ’s return; but at the same time the marriage bond is a present reality. Therefore, every worship service of the church is an encounter between Christ and His bride...It is, therefore, a thoroughly *gendered* encounter. The church, as the true feminine, the one for whose sake God created femaleness, meets with her husband, the Lord Jesus, the true man, the last Adam, the one to whom all maleness points. Paul quite explicitly says that the first man and woman were created such, and their marriage was brought about, because it was really about Christ and the church (Eph. 5:32). Adam was a pattern of the one who was to come; his wife was a pattern of His church, whom He received from the bloody wounding of His side.”  
—Matthew P.W. Roberts, *Pride: Identity and the Worship of Self*



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**Main Point:** **God has given the gift of marriage to humanity in order that men and women might together fulfill His purposes, know His kindness, and be conformed ever more to His image.**

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**Key Point:** **Through their union, husband and wife are to physically produce heirs and to spiritually produce worshippers.**

#### **2. God intends marriage to be the context in which a husband and wife experience mutual joy as well as protection from sin through their physical union.**

“Secondly, it was ordained for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication; that such persons as have not the gift of continency might marry, and keep themselves undefiled members of Christ’s body.”

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#### **Observations**

1. Both men and woman face the temptation to **immorality** as we live in a fallen world.

2. Sexual union in marriage is to involve a mutual **service** to one another.

“conjugal rights”

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3. The basis for the exhortation is the nature of marriage and what it means to be a husband or wife.

“deprive”

4. The union between husband and wife is intended to **strengthen** them in order that they might resist the devil.

**Key Point:** Because they are a gift to one another from God, they are to give themselves continually to one another.

### 3. God intends marriage to be a relationship a mutual support and ongoing growth throughout all of the various seasons of life.

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**Key Point:** As a husband and wife seek to honor Christ in how they function together in their marriage, they will experience God’s ongoing work of sanctification in their lives.

## Challenges to the Truth:

### 1. The modern notion of Romantic Love.”

“Indeed, the myths we load into weddings almost doom marriages to fail. Weddings are centered around the romantic “coupling” of two star-crossed lovers, as if marriage was an extended exercise of staring deep into one another’s eyes—with benefits. But even then, my spouse is one who sees me, will meet my needs, will fulfill my wants, will “complete me.” Even our romantic coupling becomes a form of self-love.” —James K.A. Smith, “Marriage for the Common Good”

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