Section: Doctrine of Man

**TEACHING NOTES**

**Lesson 25**

**“What is Marriage Pt. 2”- Question 29**

Pastor Joshua Kirstine

**Q29. What is marriage?**

Marriage is a covenant relationship whereby God joins together one man and one woman into a one-flesh union designed to be faithful and last until the couple is separated by death.

**Last week we saw that:**

**Marriage is God’s design and doing. He is the one who makes two become one.**

**Marriage is a Creation Ordinance. Therefore it’s perpetual and for all mankind.**

**Marriage is defined by God- as Oneness and not togetherness**

Tonight we will dig into:

**1-The Purpose of Marriage**

**2-The Fuel for lasting and healthy Marriage**

**3-The Fight to not make an idol of Marriage**

**1-The Purpose of Marriage**

**The scriptures point us to the purpose of our lives:**

**1 Corinthians 8:6** yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

**1 Corinthians 10:31** So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

**Romans 11:36** For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

**The Word of Truth Catechism Q 15. Why did God make us?**

God made us to glorify Him, so that His glory would be known and praised.

**What would make us think that our Marriages would be to serve another purpose but His Glory.?**

**Today I want to begin with Ephesians chapter 5.**

I will be bringing some additional key points from this passage in the coming weeks, but we need to get to a major point that Paul makes here before we move forward as it gives us the needed clarity for the purpose of Marriage.

This is a largely misunderstood & misinterpreted passage that must be understood and interpreted correctly if we are going to have ONENESS in our marriage as God intended!

**Ephesians 5:22-33**

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. 28 In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, 30 because we are members of his body. 31 “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” 32 This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. 33 However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

Did you hear the connection Paul makes all the way through it.

Marriage is patterned after Christ’s covenant commitment to his bride, the church!

Christ knew he would have to pay for his bride with his own blood. He called this relationship the *new covenant.. He most famously says this when given the ordinance of the Lord’s supper to the church.*

“This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.” (**Luke 22:20**).

Now, Paul acknowledges there are layers or aspects of marriage that are a mystery to us.

For example, what God does to make two one who are still two but now one in his divine economy.

Now Paul is going to say something critical in verse 32.. This mystery is profound. What mystery?

The mystery that is Marriage that is of God and that only God fully knows it’s fullness or deepest ways… But Paul helps us understand it better.. and what he says blows up most peoples most central view of the purpose of marriage. He says, “I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church”

Christ obtained the church by his blood and formed a new covenant with her, an unbreakable “marriage.”

So, Step back with me for a moment and look at Marriage with new eyes. Part of what I want to share with you on this is perspective Pastor John Piper has been a great blessing. I am thankful for His God centered view of these things and it has been a real blessing to me and I hope to you as well.

**The ultimate thing we can say about marriage is that it exists for God’s glory.**

That is, ***it exists to display God.***

Marriage is patterned after Christ’s covenant relationship to his redeemed people, the church.

And therefore, ***the highest meaning and the most ultimate purpose of marriage is to put the covenant relationship of Christ and his church on display.***

**That is why marriage exists.** That is it’s greatest God given purpose.

The covenant of redemption made before creation drove so much of God’s creation and it’s purposes and we see here that it drove the design and purpose of a marriage between man and woman unto a high and holy aim..

So, as we saw in week one, marriage is the ***doing*** of God and tonight, marriage is the ***display*** of God.

It is designed by God to display his glory in a way that no other event or institution does.

Christ won the church by his blood and formed a new covenant with her, an unbreakable “marriage.”

So marriage is like a metaphor or an image or a picture or a model that stands for something more than a man and a woman being committed to love.

*Think about it for a moment:*

**Anything that you and I try to make just for the temporary… is sin.**

**–Why? because It ignores God!**

-If our marriage is only for you and your spouse for the here and now.

-If it is just for love and pleasure and companionship.

We miss having eternal eyes for what God is doing that is bigger than just you and me in our marriage.

Marriage is special because it points to, it gets to model, it shows in practical everyday ways the intimacy that we (the church- the bride) & Christ (the groom) have forever because of the Gospel.

🡪It is another way we get to show the redemptive work of Jesus & show that it is Good NEWS!

**To see this further look at 28-30**

**Ephesians 5:28-30** In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, 30 because we are members of his body.

**This describes the parallel between Christ & the church being *one body* & a husband & wife being *one flesh*.**

In other words, the one-flesh union between man and wife means that in a sense they are now one body so that the care a husband has for his wife he, in that very act, has for himself.

**They are one.** **What he does for her…. he does for himself.**

**So, When the husband cherishes & nourishes his wife, he cherishes & nourishes himself**

Another theologian says it this way: “As God made man in His own image, so He made earthly marriage in the image of His own eternal marriage with His people”

That’s the Purpose for ONENESS!

Your Marriage ultimately exist not for you but to GLORIFY and magnify GOD!

Now, here is why that matters. And why we can’t just dismiss this as*, “oh that is a nice thought”*

Fulfilling your covenant to your marriage vows is not mainly about staying in love or remaining happy.

It is about keeping covenant before God that displays God and points others to God.

“Till death do us part” or “As long as we both shall live” is a sacred covenant promise—the same kind Jesus made with his bride when he died for her.

Therefore, breaking that covenant is not merely covenant-breaking to the spouse, but it misrepresents Christ and his covenant. This is Jesus high aim as he reminds the Pharisee’s

“So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.” **Matt 19:6**

When marriage is about the temporary, When it is about you, when it is about happiness, when it is about freedom from conflict, we make it about something man centered something far less then what **God created it for.**

HIM. His Glory. A display of his irrevocable, unbreakable bond Jesus has with his bride.

This is so important because so many days we make marriage about companionship and romance and love. Not that those things are not a big part of a **“healthy marriage”** but we must see that there is a work we are doing and a story we are telling that is so much bigger than us.

It is rooted in the Creator’s very design for marriage and how ultimately it points to God and his glory and his gospel! The covenant keeping aspect of Marriage is an essential aspect of what it is intended to do. This is why, when the fleshly aspects or luster of a marriage become hard or even nonexistent, there is a still a covenant to keep and a story to tell. It is still way bigger than us.

This is also why working on your marriage to grow in Christ, to communicate, serve each other, to stay committed and work through hurts is so important because it affects the story you tell.

Again, it is not just what you are comfortable with. Far too many married people are content to just settle for what they are ok with in a marriage. NO we must strive for more because our marriages represent so much more then companionship and romance and love.

God designed the relationship between a husband and his wife to represent the relationship between Christ and the church. **This is the deepest meaning of marriage.**

And that is why ultimately the roles of headship and submission are so important.

Next lesson, we will get into the God given roles of marriage but…

If our marriages are going to tell the truth about Christ and his church, we cannot be indifferent to God’s design for headship and submission. We must live it!

Now, what you must understand is how different this looks then the modern manmade mode and method of marriage that we see all around us today. I want to give you a picture of covenant keeping and putting Christ and his bride on display as the Primary purpose of Marriage when the common secondary aspects of marriage are unattainable. Watch this testimony and consider the fact that many of the things that many people say must be happening in a marriage are not happening but how that doesn’t stop these two from the Primary aim or purpose for their marriage. Gospel testimony and God’s glory!

Watch- Testimony Video- Ian & Larissa

I want to shift now to application. If ONENESS is God’s design and His glory and the Gospel are the purpose.. then…. **How we keep the covenant of marriage but not just keep it but thrive in it?**

**Or What is the Fuel for a healthy and lasting marriage?**  
To understand what it is we need to go back to the beginning…

**2. The Fuel for lasting and healthy Marriage**

**Genesis 2:24-25** Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. 25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

Look with me at verse 25 closer!

**They were naked means they were transparent**.

they didn’t need to control what other people knew, they didn’t need to hide.

**They felt no shame means they where completely at ease with themselves.**

they had a stable identity.

**God designed us to be: known and yet loved. Naked but unashamed!**

I will read that again.. listen.. take it in!

The Problem is in order for the sinful fractured world to get acceptance we have to play the game of hiding who we really are in order to be accepted. Sin brought selfish divide to marriage. It became the poison that created great conflict and even divorce.

In our sin we are forced to choose & the choice is hard..

**1. We can be unashamed but to have it we can’t be naked or transparent.**

So we have to hide our real selves. Put up mask.

**2. We can be naked but find ourselves constantly getting rejected.**

**So how can you and I be honest and real and naked before one another without the shame of all of our sin being out there?**

🡪The answer is: **We need a spiritual cover!**

**Did you know that when Jesus hung on the cross he was naked?**

It was the ultimate humiliation…. **Why.. would he do that for you & me?**

**He did it so He could be our spiritual cover.**

He took on our shame so we could be free to be in true community again. … to be venerable with each other again…. To stop hiding the real us!

We finally, **In Christ**, can be transparent again and finally go deep with other people in authentic grace loving lasting deep relationship with each other.

**WE CAN HAVE THIS!**

To try to have this in a lasting way without Jesus means we will run and hide and struggle to have intimacy. To have oneness.

**Ecclesiastes 4:9-12** Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. 10 For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! 11 Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? 12 And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him

But the scripture doesn’t end there…. It says…

—a threefold cord is not quickly broken

The beauty of Christ being the center of your marriage. The Glue. The Fuel.

The Key to this is Jesus… **He is the third cord that binds you.** That empowers you to love each other each day sacrificially.

The Love of God- True other-centered love. Is the kind of love a marriage MUST have if it is going to thrive.

**WHY?** Because the moment you get selfish in a marriage. The moment you make it about you is when it breaks. **Tears at your oneness.**

Too many couples live long seasons outside of real oneness. In a state of pragmatic Divorce- maybe not legal paper work divorce but at disconnected union –anytime one is selfishly living you are not acting as one.

It is when you stop loving with an other-centered love that is binding.

And starting living in a Me-centered love that is dividing.

To truly do this is a lasting and real way: **We need that spiritual cover!** A power bigger then ourselves! Someone who can bring a selfless love into play that we know nothing of by ourselves in our sin**. We Need Jesus!** ….To change us from the inside out … to change our hearts to love with other-centered affection and care.

**First: Where do we find Love?**

**1 John 4:7-8** Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

John says, “God is love,” not “Love is from God.”

Our world, with its shallow and selfish view of love, has turned these words around and contaminated our understanding of love. The world idolizes *an idea* of love, rather than rightly loving and being love based on the true God. “Love” (whatever subjective/changing definition the world gives to that concept) has become an idol.

**The world thinks that love is what makes a person feel good and that it is all right to sacrifice moral principles and others’ rights in order to obtain such “love.”**

But that isn’t real love; it is the exact opposite—**selfishness.**

And God is not that kind of so-called “love.” Real love is from God, who is holy, just, and perfect. If we truly know God, we will love as he does.- **To know God is to know Love!**

**The true definition of Love…..**

**1 Corinthians 13:4-7** Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant 5 or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; 6 it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. 7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

\* What do all these things have in common in describing Love? Selfless!

100%/selfless-

**- When it comes to a lasting marriage and real oneness ….We depend on God’s sacrificial love.**

The biggest way we have tweaked love is to think that is something we use for gain.

Example: By loving this person …..they will be around me a lot…..

……. they help me when I am down. ….. they will give me things (items)…..

they will give me pleasure (physical & mental)……they will give me status …….

\*This is so far from what love is it is not even funny! And yet we treat it this way.

So this is why divorce happens.. Every divorce begins with selfish love in play.

Some marriages are set up to fail from day one because selfish love is all they have known.

Here is why that is a problem:

**Selfish** love will fade away when the person does not provide any longer what the heart really wants to gain! **WHY? Expand….**

But in contrast:

***Selfless or sacrificial***  love will always remain because what is to be gained is already had in Christ.

**WHY? Expand…**

**Christ as the GLUE! Changing you from within to produce the fruit of the Spirit**

**LOVE, JOY, PEACE, PATIENCE, KINDNESS, GENTLENESS, SELF-CONTROL, GOODNESS, Faithfulness,**

**This is why Jesus is so critical to your marriage as the third strand. To braid you together.**

**The priority of your love is also key if Christ is going to do this in your marriage:**

The Great Commandment:

**Matthew 22:37-40** And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40 On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

🡪First & foremost we are to **love God** more than anything or anyone else!

I think we say this as Christians but do we truly mean it. IS God first in your life and love.

Because if he truly is: You would forsake everything else before him. Meaning if left with only one thing… all family, money, health, status, friends, come after Him. Meaning when you tragically lose one of these.. you aren’t undone because you still have a great and deep love and relationship with God. He must be first… Let’s look at how this plays out..

It says, Love the lord your God with **“all”. What does all mean here?**

<>Does that mean sometimes? <>Does that mean part way?

<>Does that mean when you feel like it? <>Does that mean give him some of your heart?

**“You want to know the number one thing that will challenge this very commandment in your life in your life?” Because for many it’s not God.**

The biggest thing I see take people who are living for Christ away from their commitment to God is a **🡪 Relationship or Love for someone that gets Priority!”**

**This is typically a spouse, Boyfriend/girlfriend, or a child.**

…you need to make sure that you don’t love them more than God!

🡪 They cannot be first. You might be thinking … **did I just hear that correctly?**  YES!

I make sure I love God more than anything else… including my wonder wife, Jennifer.

Because when and if My love for her is greater than my love and hunger for God then I am trying to love her based on my own power.. my own ability….

**And you know what happens?** **my selfishness will rule that relationship.**

my love for her will be limited! It Will be weaker..

**But, if I love God first and give him my best, my greatest love!**

Then I will be fueled by his abundant SELFLESS love and poor that into my bride.

I will essentially end up loving her **way more** then I would have if they where first, trying to do it on my own with out God’s overflow.

When he is at the top.. we will overflow….from Him down. \* I can’t tell you how seriously and game changing this is. In almost 19 years of marriage it all gets better, why? Growth in Jesus!

Because God is sanctifying us and stirring in us a love for each other that is less from my flesh and more from Christ at work in us.

🡪If God is first & you are seeking to obey Him then your love for who ever else will be accurately placed. **--You will never do anything for them that jeopardizes your love for God**

🡪When we commit our greatest love to God,

He then reveals how best to love those around us!

**Is Christ Center of your marriage? Is he your first love?**

**Are you investing real time into your relationship with Christ, in prayer and in his word so that he is fueling you with an overflow of his selfless sacrificial love?** This is the fuel of marriage.

As we come back later in our series to the more pragmatic aspects of marriage in communication, intimacy money, time and relationships we will see how the fuel of selfless love is so essential to all aspects of a healthy and lasting marriage. Don’t skip the Saturday session we have about these things in a few weeks.

**3-The Fight to not make an idol of Marriage**

We need to better understand that… **Human Marriage is Not Forever.** It points to the marriage that Christ has with his bride which is forever. But **Human Marriage is Not Forever.**

It has a purpose for a time. It serves it’s purpose in this life for those whom God calls to it.

It is a testimony of the Gospel. It is a means to children and disciple making.

But human marriage is not needed in Heaven. Therefore we must hold it rightly. It cannot be our identity.   
it cannot be our ultimate joy or reason for living.

The scriptures say that Marriage is a good gift of God but the world is fallen, sin abounds, and obeying God to the end is costly.

Additionally, suffering is to be expected in this life, which means it can be expecting within our marriages.

**Matt. 10:36** is clear to say that “a person’s enemies will be those of his own house hold”.

Marriage is not salvation, it is not ultimate. While deep companionship, memorable romance, passionate sexual intimacy and precious children may come. We must hold them loosely and Rightly…. Paul goes so far to say that there is a way to thrive in marriage as if thriving was not connected to marriage. Scriptures that help us see this are…

Let those who have wives live as though they had none. (1 Cor. 7:29)

“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.” (Luke 14:26)

“Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life.” (Luke 18:29–30)

Church and Friends, We must prepare for, invest into and hold rightly our marriages but we need be so careful to not make them in any way, ultimate. We must practice yielding to God all things. This includes our spouses, our children, our jobs, our bodies. We must not be defined by these and or held captive to them. But instead only God.

**Colossians 3:1**If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. **2**Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. **3**For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. **4 When Christ who is your life** appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Only “In Christ who is our life” are we able to look to the good things in our life and see them as good and not have to make them ultimate things.

So your marriage is a good thing but not the ultimate thing.

I want to close tonight with this excerpt from one of our favorite books about Marriage, written by John Piper. He says,

Marriage is not mainly about prospering economically; it is mainly about displaying the covenant-keeping love between Christ and his church. Knowing Christ is more important than making a living. Treasuring Christ is more important than bearing children. Being united to Christ by faith is a greater source of marital success than perfect sex and double-income prosperity. If we make secondary things primary, they cease to be secondary and become idolatrous. They have their place. But they are not first, and they are not guaranteed. Life is precarious, and even if it is long by human standards, it is short. “What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes” (James 4:14). “Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring” (Prov. 27:1).

So it is with marriage. It is a momentary gift. It may last a lifetime, or it may be snatched away on the honeymoon. Either way, it is short. It may have many bright days, or it may be covered with clouds. If we make secondary things primary, we will be embittered at the sorrows we must face. But if we set our face to make of marriage mainly what God designed it to be, no sorrows and no calamities can stand in our way. Every one of them will be, not an obstacle to success, but a way to

succeed. The beauty of the covenant-keeping love between Christ and his church shines brightest when nothing but Christ can sustain it. Very soon the shadow will give way to Reality. The partial will pass into the Perfect. The foretaste will lead to the Banquet. The troubled path will end in Paradise. A hundred candle-lit evenings will come to their consummation in the marriage supper of the Lamb. And this momentary marriage will be swallowed up by Life. Christ will be all and in all. And the purpose of marriage will be complete. To that end may God give us eyes to see what matters most in this life. May the Holy Spirit, whom he sends, make his crucified and risen Son the supreme Treasure of our lives. And may that Treasure so satisfy our souls that the root of every marriage-destroying impulse is severed. And may the marriage-watching world be captivated by the covenant- keeping love of Christ.” **John Piper- This Momentary Marriage.**