

Introduction:

- We have spoken about family and marriage on the anvil of home.
- We have looked at God's design for family and pointed you to important tools of building a successful family with.
- Today I want us to look at God's design for marriage. What is that design and what is its significance?
- Marriage is to be a reflection of Christ's love for His bride, the church.

I. What Is God's Design For Marriage?

- A. What is it all about?
 1. God's design for marriage is about companionship, covenant, and family.
 2. Society, our culture, has reduced marriage to a secular contract that allows us to legally live together.
 3. Society, our culture, has also defiled marriage to the place where it has no convictions or judgments of God's word.
 4. So let's look at Gods word today and see if we can find God's design for marriage. God's design for marriage is about companionship, covenant, and family.
- B. God's design for marriage is that marriage would be a reflection of Christ's love for His bride the church. We see that in Eph 5. *Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church.* Ie. Hosea the prophet marries a prostitute who is unfaithful yet God says go and get her back, for this is how I love Israel.

II. God's First Design in Marriage is Companionship:

- A. Ge 2:18 *And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper suitable to him."* NKJV
- B. God saw that Adam was alone and that it was not good.
 1. Marriage is designed that life might be shared together.
 2. **Companionship** therefore becomes the basis of marriage.
 3. Companionship is what brought you to a place of marriage. You desired and found a companion to share life with.
- C. The Hebrew word translated 'helper' carries the understanding of companion, not helper.
 1. It is also a companion suitable to him.
 2. Suitable can be understood to mean complete—'my other half' – the one who completes me. It is simply the half that completes you and is intended to make you whole.
 3. God created Eve to be Adams companion and later in the Word, Adam is to be Eve's companion.
 - a) *"who forsakes the companion of her youth and forgets the covenant of her*

God;" (Proverbs 2:17, ESV) Uses the word companion and this Hebrew word is ... 'alluph"

- b) Companion (Hebrew) 'alluph' – means tamed. One that is close or intimate with another. You can't be close to a wild animal but you can be close to a tame one, companion.
 - (1) It is not a weak word, for to be tamed implies great trust. Trust is a very strong word in a world where so little of it is found.
 - (2) The core understanding is a close intimate relationship based on trust.
- c) Mal 2:14 *"But you say, "Why does he not?" Because the Lord was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant."* (Malachi 2:14, ESV)
- d) The English word translated companion comes from another Hebrew word.
 - (1) 'habar' - means companion.
 - (2) It is the root word for the word Hebron which we know means 'place of association' or companionship. David's men said of him at Hebron, *"we are bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh."* We are your expression!
 - (a) It is what Adam said of Eve in the garden.
 - (b) It is what Ruth does /says to Naomi– *"where ever you go I go, where you sleep I sleep, your people are my people."* Ruth 1:16
 - (3) A companion involves closeness.
 - (a) A companion is one with whom you are intimately united in thoughts, plans, goals, efforts and affections.
 - (b) **Gods' expectation is that you would meet each other's need for companionship.** Love, in marriage, focuses on giving one's spouse the companionship he/she needs in order to eliminate loneliness. This is a truth the church must embrace if we are to ever outperform the world in regard to keeping marriage covenant.
 - (c) God expects you to be each other's greatest companion and secondly...

III. God's design for marriage is that of honoring covenant. in Mal 2:14 and Proverbs 2:17 the words companion and covenant are found to together. (God's design). This is why living together is not God's design, but living together in covenant is.

A. We know that scripture is very clear about honoring covenant.

1. Joseph and Mary's engagement/betrothal was so binding that it could only be dissolved by death or divorce because of marital unfaithfulness.
2. Mal. 2:14 declares that marriage is a covenantal relationship. It is a formal agreement between two people, to be for a lifetime. In marriage they covenant to keep each other from ever being lonely so long as they both shall live. Remember the traditional vows: "for better or worse, richer or poor, sickness and in health..."

Now do you see why you say that? You are committing to be with a person for a lifetime in every state or condition of life to keep them from being lonely and in honoring covenant. Just as God honors covenant with us...in every state or condition of life.

- B. Covenant is central to our relationship with God. And marriage is a natural picture of covenant expressed in the earth.
 - 1. God expects you to honor covenant with Him.
 - 2. God expects you to honor covenant with each other.
 - 3. In Pr. 2:17 and Mal. 2:14 we see that forsaking a companion is the same as forgetting the marriage covenant. Thirdly...

IV. God's design for marriage is that you become one flesh

- A. This is a phrase that needs explanation. The Hebrew means much more than being united in sexual intercourse. It means to become one person. Ie. I am in Christ and He is in me. We are one, together.
- B. God expected Adam and Eve to be so close they could know what the other is thinking, feeling, needing, expressing.
 - 1. Eph. 5:28-31 speaks of a relationship of man so close to his wife that whatever he does to her (good or bad) he also does to himself since the two are **one** flesh.
 - a) It goes back to the 'the other half' in the point earlier in covenant we complete each other.
 - b) When we can understand the depths of this we will begin to understand the bridegroom model of Jesus and His bride—the church.