

Last week we began a short series on the major reasons for marriage—if you recall, I suggested there are three major reasons for marriage—imitation, companionship, and procreation—having considered the first last week, we come this week to the second and to this truth—a primary purpose for marriage is to meet man's need for companionship.

LBC (25:2)—"Marriage was ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife (companionship), for the increase of mankind (procreation), and for preventing of uncleanness (sanctification)."

The writers of our confession assume what we learned last week, and that is, marriage was intended to imitate or reflect Christ and the church (this goes without saying), and thus, provides mutual help or companionship as the first purpose for marriage.

Thus, I want to consider our theme, Marital Companionship, under three heads—Needed, Promoted, and Clarified—I first want to show you the need for companionship, secondly, how companionship can be promoted, and then finally, I want to end with some clarifications.

- I. Marital Companionship Needed
- II. Marital Companionship Promoted
- III. Marital Companionship Clarified

I. Marital Companionship Needed

1. There are two accounts of man's creation in Genesis—Moses first describes it in 1:26-28 in a summary fashion, and then gives the particulars in 2:15-25.
2. Actually, what we have in 2:15-25 are the specific details as to why and how God made the woman and marriage (He made the woman from and for the man).
3. V18—"And the LORD God said, It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."
4. In verses 19-20, Adam named all the animals, and yet, v20—"But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him."
5. In other words, as wonderful as the animals were, there was not one among them, who could meet Adam's needs.
6. The Hebrew word rendered "comparable" is translated "mate" "fit for" or "companion"—it literally means "opposite to."
7. Adam needed a helper that was opposite him—he needed a helper that could compliment or be suitable to him.
8. He needed a helper that was specifically fit for him as a man in paradise—it was not good that he should be alone.
9. Now, the fact that Adam needed a suitable companion is interesting for the fact that he was presently in paradise.
10. After each day of creation, the Lord assessed His work on that day and pronounced it as good (v10, v12, v18, v25).
11. And yet, now on the sixth day, after He made man, He concludes, Gen.2:18—"It is not good that man should be alone."
12. In other words, even in paradise, man was in need of a companion, created by God, as a suitable helper for him.
13. Thus, at this point I want to spend just a few minutes and summarize three important truths about man's helper.
14. (a) This helper would be opposite man to be suitable to man—it would not have been a suitable helper if Eve were a man.
15. Brethren, let me briefly underscore the obvious—the companionship that exists in marriage is between a man and woman.

16. This companionship is something that can only take place between a man and woman—they are designed to assist each other.
17. (b) This helper would be given in the context of marriage—no sooner did God make the woman, He then performed the first marriage (2:24-25).
18. Thus, the companionship I am here refereeing to, takes place within the covenant arrangement called marriage.
19. It is not enough that a man has a girlfriend—a girlfriend is not sufficient to meet man's native need for companionship.
20. Only marriage, between a man and woman, is the proper companionship found that both man and woman need.
21. (c) The helper would help man fulfill his mandate—this is found back in the first account of man's creation (1:28).
22. Gen. 1:28—"Then God blessed them, and God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."
23. In other words, man needed a woman to assist him in all that he was created for (and not merely physical intimacy).
24. Yes, man needed a woman to assist him fill the earth with offspring, but he needed help in subduing the earth.
25. All that man was created for, God gave him a helper to assist him—the two perfectly complimented each other.
26. Thus, it's important to remember, when God says it's not good that man should be alone, he includes woman also.
27. If woman compliments man then man compliments woman—the need is mutual—man and woman need each other.
28. Thus, if man in paradise had need of a suitable companion (helper), how much more is this true of man after the fall.
29. Charles Bridges—"If it was not good in paradise, much less is it in a wilderness world. What claim, then, has a monastic or a celibate life to higher perfection?"
30. Martin Luther—"Today, after our nature has become corrupted by sin, woman is needed not only to secure increase (procreation) but also for companionship and for protection (that is, from sexual impurity).
31. Thus, at this point I want to suggest five reasons why fallen man (which includes woman), needs companionship.
32. (1) To assist us—by this I mean, husbands and wives need each other to fulfill God's original mandate given to man.
33. This is very important to remember—marriage is in many ways, two people joining forces to fulfill God's mandate.
34. And in the broadest sense, what is God's mandate to man, but to labor within this world, to honor and glorify Him.
35. My wife and I have said many times—there's nothing we cannot accomplish as a team—together we are unstoppable.
36. Doug Wilson—"Marriage was created by God to provide companionship in the labor of dominion. The cultural mandate, the requirement to fill and subdue the earth, is still in force, and a husband cannot fulfill this portion of the task in isolation. He needs a companion suitable for him in the work to which God has called him."
37. (2) To correct us—brethren, we all need spouses to correct us when we are wrong—to point out our weak spots.
38. Husbands must correct their wives lovingly and wives their husbands respectively, but correct them they must.
39. Nobody is more qualified to point out our faults than those who know us best, and no one knows us like our spouse.
40. Thus, it's for this reason the Scriptures repeatedly describe a friend as someone who tells us the truth about ourselves.

41. Prov.27:6—"Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful"—by wounds is meant correction.
42. This is an important purpose for marriage—to correct each other when we act contrary to wisdom and commonsense.
43. It's unbiblical for a man to refuse correction from their wife—who better to point out his faults than those who know him best.
44. A man (or woman) who refuses correction from their spouse is either perfect (and thus needs no correction) or proud.
45. (3) To sanctify us—this is obviously an important point—we each must think of our spouses' spiritual condition.
46. Prov.27:17—"As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another"—brethren, "man" here is used in its broader sense to include women.
47. This verse simply refers to the universal need of friends that will be used of God to sharpen us (or sanctify us.)
48. This means we must keep each other accountable—we must pray for each other and read the Scriptures together.
49. If in marriage we become one flesh, then surely this means we must be concerned for each other's spiritual condition.
50. Perhaps I can even say—this is a primary purpose of marriage—to provide a man/woman a spouse to help them to heaven.
51. Now, brethren, I'm fully aware that in one sense we are not able to help our spouses to heaven—only their heavenly Husband can do that.
52. But here I am speaking in a comparative sense, just as Paul told the Philippians they are to work out their own salvation.
53. The next important thing after working out our own salvation, is assisting our spouses to work out their salvation.
54. What a blessing! To know there's always at least one person who cares for my soul and prays for me every day!
55. (4) To encourage us—live can be very discouraging—and it's within marriage we find our greatest encourager.
56. Brethren, humanly speaking, I do not think I could make it without my wife—she always puts wind in my sail.
57. How many times have I become so discouraged with things, that I feel like giving up—throwing in the towel.
58. And how many times, has my wife spoken words of wisdom and strength into my soul—how many times has she pulled me up!
59. And conversely—how often has my wife looked to me to help her—to encourage her when she feels defeated.
60. Ecc.4:9-10—"Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up."
61. This passage is often quoted at weddings and for good reasons, as it beautiful illustrates a primary benefit for marriage.
62. We live in a very discouraging world—sometimes I feel as if the entire world is against me and I want to give up.
63. I simply can not fathom how I would make it without having at least one person in this world stand by my side.
64. What a blessing it is, to have a spouse who corrects me when I'm wrong, and yet never crushes me when I'm down.
65. (5) To accompany us—in many ways we can summarize marriage as, two people committing to live life together.
66. A married person never has to fear of being alone—they always have a friend—someone to accompany them through life.

67. Perhaps I can go as far as to say—in marriage we not only find a faithful friend, but we find our BEST friend.
68. Song 5:16—"His mouth is most sweet, yes, He is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend."
69. Remember, brethren while this ultimately applies to the church's opinion of Christ, it includes a woman's view of her husband.
70. I find it nothing short of tragic, that many husbands and wives, do not find in their spouse their ultimate best friend.
71. Is it wrong to have other friends in addition to your spouse? No! But it is wrong to have a friend closer than your spouse!
72. Brethren, how sad it is that so many women, especially, have to look outside their husbands for their best friend.
73. Prov.17:17—"A friend loves at all times, and a brother (wife or husband) is born for adversity"—they stick it out.
74. What a joy, brethren, to be married! To find in my spouse my best friend, who loves me "at all times" and never leaves me.
75. Joel Beeke—"A married man has a companion who enters his heart, partakes of all that happens to him, is touched by all his disasters, and does everything in her power to sweeten his condition, ease his mind, cheer his heart, and share his troubles."
76. This is a primary purpose for marriage—to provide a companion in life—to share in the good, bad, happy, and sad.

II. Marital Companionship Promoted

1. Here I want to address the question—How are we to foster a closer friendship within the covenant of marriage?
2. Perhaps I can word the question like this—How can husbands and wives, become best friends with their spouse?
3. (1) Remember your covenant vow to your spouse—that is, remember God has made marriage to provide companionship.
4. This is where we must start—you must be convinced that God has intended marriage to provide you closest companion.
5. It's for this reason, the Scripture often weds together the concepts of companionship and covenant within marriage.
6. Prov.2;17—"The immoral woman forsakes the companion of her youth, and forgets the covenant of her God."
7. Notice how Solomon equates these two phrases "the companion of your youth" and "the covenant of her God."
8. In other words—when they married, or covenanted together before God, they promised to live as companions.
9. Mal.2:14—"The LORD has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, with whom you have dwelt treacherously; yet she is your companion and your wife by covenant."
10. Here God is condemning His covenant people for their wickedness, and in particular, the way they treated their wives.
11. They were divorcing them and marrying pagan women—but notice how the Lord describes their wives—"she is your companion and your wife by covenant."
12. Here God equates the terms "companion" and "wife"—these are used synonymously because they describe the same person.
13. I can refer to Angie as my wife, or else, I could describe her as my companion—she is my companion by covenant.
14. And thus, here's my point—if you desire to strengthen this relationship you must first remember your covenant vows.

15. The question isn't whether or not your spouse is your companion, the question is, is he or she a close companion?
16. (2) Spend quality time with your spouse—while my wife is my companion by covenant, this doesn't deny we need to grow in our friendship.
17. I feel terrible for any man or woman who does not enjoy spending time with their spouse—what a total tragedy.
18. And brethren, I totally understand there are busy seasons when spending time alone with your spouse is difficult.
19. But remember ladies, as important as your children are, your husband came first, and he must remain your priority.
20. Thus, it's important for us to take an interest in those things our spouse enjoys doing, and the places they enjoy visiting.
21. I hereby given a public invitation for any married couple—you can drop your children off at our house anytime.
22. I want to challenge you this morning—regardless if you've been married for a year or for 50 years—do you spent quality time with your spouse.
23. By "quality time" I mean, time alone where you can enjoy each other's company and do things alone as a couple.
24. For example, we have good friends (in another church) who love to visit Amish Country—they love to browse the shops.
25. Well actually, she loves to brows the shops and specifically look for doilies (I think she collects them and has a house full of them).
26. Last week I knew they were down there and so I called him and asked—Are you guys have a good time shopping!
27. He laughed and said—"O yea! We're going to our third shop already and my wife has looked at dozens of doilies!"
28. Now, he was being a little sarcastic, because if truth be told, he doesn't share his wife's appreciation for doilies.
29. But what he does appreciate is his wife—and he loves spending time with her regardless of what that means for him.
30. (3) Share yourself with your spouse—by this I mean, we must speak to each other, and share our hearts with each other.
31. Now, I know as soon as I say this, many of you men will feel uncomfortable—you may even resist what I'm saying.
32. Oh no, you might think, I knew this was coming—you expect me to listen to my wife describe her struggles, and I'm to reveal my struggles.
33. And brothers—Yes, this is exactly what I am saying, for there's simply no way to grow closer without mutual sharing.
34. Now, in order to help my brothers, I want to remind you of what we learned last week—marriage reflects the relationship between Christ and the church.
35. And let me ask you this question—What do you think Christ thinks about sharing Himself with His beloved Bride?
36. Hasn't Christ revealed all that He thinks of her within the Holy Scriptures, and doesn't He delight in listening to what she says to Him.
37. Song 2:14—"O My dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the cliff, let Me see your face, let Me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely."
38. This is an amazing verse in every way—can we even begin to grasp how much Christ loves His beloved people!
39. He desires to see and hear His bride—that is, He desires to spend time with her and to hear her voice in prayer.
40. Brethren, this is what our Savior things of us! And if this is what He thinks of us, then this is what we must think of our wives!

41. Wayne Mack—"One definition of marriage that I really like is: Marriage is a total commitment and a total sharing of the total person with another person until death."
42. This means we share with our spouse our fears, joys, victories, and failures—we speak to them and listen to them.

III. Marital Companionship Clarified

1. Here I want to provide three clarifications or corrections, that might be necessary in light of our subject of marital companionship.
2. (1) The reality and possibility of singleness—I don't want to be misunderstood—singleness is not wrong or sinful.
3. Because of the fall, there are several reasons for singlehood—had man never fell, nobody would ever be single.
4. But there are a number of reasons why a person might be single—(a) perhaps they were married and are now widowed.
5. (b) Perhaps they are uniquely equipped to remain single—this often happens in times of great persecution (1Cor.7:26).
6. (c) Perhaps they desire to be married but it providentially hasn't happened yet—they are simply waiting on God.
7. Such single people are an important part of the church, and ought to spend themselves in humble service to the church.
8. But the question might be asked—If it isn't good for man to be alone, then what does this say to a single person?
9. Well, very simply—if you are single for any of these three reasons, then the Lord Himself will be your Portion!
10. (2) The need for non-marital companionship—again, don't misunderstand me, it's right to have friends other than your spouse.
11. I am so thankful that my wife has many friends, and she can pour out her heart to them, and receive good counsel.
12. There are specific issues that may be best addressed with another woman, and I encourage my wife to discuss these with her friends.
13. This is also true of men—we need male friends who can understand the unique difficulties and pressures of manhood.
14. (3) The only perfect companion is Christ—dear brethren, this is a very needful reminder—there is only one perfect friend.
15. And here's an interesting fact—the closer husbands and wives get to Him, the closer they will get to each other.
16. I want to close by applying our text to Christ—"It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper suitable to him."
17. That is, man after his fall will need a friend that sticks closer than a brother—a Companion that will never leave him.
18. Brethren, who is more suited to be a sinner's friend than Christ! A companion to assist us, correct us, sanctify us, encourage us, and accompany us!
19. Poor sinner! It is not good for you to be alone! You need a suitable Helper! You need a faithful Friend! You need a Savior!
20. Hymn (433)—"I've found a Friend, O such a Friend! So kind and true and tender, so wise a Counselor and Guide, so mighty a Defender! From him who loves me now so well, what power my soul can sever? Shall life or death, shall earth or hell? No! I am his forever."