

1 Are you the right spouse?

BE THE KIND OF PEOPLE WHO CAN STAY MARRIED

2 The real tragedy of divorce

▶ "Therefore, what makes divorce and remarriage so horrific in God's eyes is not merely that it involves covenant-breaking to the spouse, but that involves misrepresenting Christ and His covenant. Christ will never leave His wife. Ever." (John Piper)

▶ *She who forsakes the partner of her youth and has forgotten the covenant of her God, (Proverbs 2:17, LEB)*

▶ "To break faith with your spouse is to break faith with God at the same time." (Tim Keller)

3 Summary

▶ Men cannot understand the greatness of marriage without divine intervention

▶ Marriage is God's idea – it is from God and through God.

▶ There will not be human marriage in heaven – marriage is a momentary gift made to be permanent on earth.

▶ Marriage exist to reenact the gospel, to display the loving union between Christ and His bride which is the church.

▶ Staying married is not mainly about staying in love. It is about keeping covenant.

4 Naked and not ashamed

WAS THIS JUST THE RESULT OF THEIR PERFECT BODIES?

5 Genesis 2:23-25

▶ *Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. (Genesis 2:23–25, ESV)*

▶

6 Why were they not ashamed?

▶ It could be because sin had not yet entered the world and Adam and Eve had the two most perfect bodies of any humans who have ever lived.

▶ That would be a plausible interpretation were it not for how Jesus used this same passage in the NT.

7 Physical perfection would not be enough

▶ When you are cranky, selfish, or unkind, you can make comments in a way that shames another person.

▶ So physical perfection is not enough.

▶ The person looking at you must be morally upright, gracious, and care for you so deeply that they would not shame you.

8 Covenant love

THE REAL BASIS FOR A LACK OF SHAME

9 Mark 10:7-12

"Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' So, they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." And in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. And he said to them,

"Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery." (Mark 10:7–12, ESV)



10 **Jesus emphasized permanence of marriage on earth**

- ▶ Genesis 2:24–25 is intended to provide foundational wisdom for marriage long after the fall of man into sin.
- ▶ We can see this by the way Jesus makes use of verse 24. He makes it the basis of his statement, *"What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate"* (Mark 10:9).
- ▶ In other words, what God is revealing in Genesis 2:24–25 has relevance long after the Fall.
- ▶ So, it doesn't seem that the main point would only relate to the pre-Fall situation, namely, the perfection of their bodies. (John Piper, *This Momentary Marriage*)

11 **The covenant enables a shame-free marriage**

- ▶ *Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.* (Genesis 2:24, ESV)
- ▶ It is because Adam and Eve are holding fast to each other in a covenant relationship created and initiated by God that they have the ability for a shame-free marriage.



12 **Two reasons to be shameless**

- ▶ Only 2 reasons to not experience shame:
 - ▶ I am perfect (not likely!). In this case, there is no shame because we are flawless (again, not likely!).
 - ▶ I enjoy a life based on the gracious nature of covenant love. In this case, there is no shame because love covers a multitude of flaws.
 - ▶ *Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.* (1 Peter 4:8, ESV)



13 **The covenant is the key**

- ▶ *Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.* (Genesis 2:24–25, ESV)
- ▶ Verse 25 flows out of the truth in verse 24.
- ▶ God initiates a covenant relationship between the husband and the wife. Then they are not ashamed.
- ▶ The covenant is the key!



14 **When sin came into the world**

- ▶ After the Fall, sin entered the world
 - ▶ There were no longer any "perfect bodies"
 - ▶ But God's design for marriage is still the same:
 - ▶ It is to be permanent on earth to reflect the permanent nature of our covenant relationship with God
 - ▶ Jesus will never abandon His bride
- ▶ For that reason, God still intends for marriage to persist in a shame-free state

15 **First thing after the Fall**

For God knows that on the day you both eat from it, then your eyes will be opened and you both shall be like gods, knowing good and evil." When the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes, and the tree was desirable to make one wise, then she took from its fruit and she ate. And she gave it also to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed together fig leaves and they made for themselves coverings. (Genesis 3:5–7, LEB)

16 **Pay attention to the immediate consequence of sin**

- ▶ They still had perfect bodies (though they started their inevitable decay) but were immediately ashamed.
- ▶ So, bodily perfection was not the reason for their lack of shame!
 - ▶ Before the Fall, what ought to be and what the reality was is the same
 - ▶ After the Fall, what ought to be and what "is" is no longer the same.

17 **Back to the design**

- ▶ Remember that the real purpose of marriage is to demonstrate the permanence of our relationship with Jesus Christ
- ▶ *"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. (Ephesians 5:31–32, ESV)*

18 **The essential truth**

- ▶ Jesus Christ passes over the sins of His bride.
- ▶ His bride is free from shame not because she is perfect, but because she has no fear that her lover will condemn her or shame her because of her sin.
- ▶ The doctrine of justification by grace is at the very heart of what makes marriage work the way God designed it.
 - ▶ Justification creates peace with God vertically.
 - ▶ When experienced horizontally, it creates shame-free peace between an imperfect man and an imperfect woman.

19 **The only basis for a marriage that lasts**20 **Colossians 3:12-14**

Therefore, as the chosen of God, holy and dearly loved, put on affection, compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, putting up with one another and forgiving one another. If anyone should have a complaint against anyone, just as also the Lord forgave you, thus also you do the same. And to all these things add love, which is the bond of perfection.

21 **Colossians 3:15-17**

And the peace of Christ must rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body, and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another with all wisdom, with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God, and everything whatever you do in word or in deed, giving thanks for all things in the name of the Lord Jesus to God the Father through him. (Colossians 3:12–17, LEB)

22 **Marriage is the Doing of God**

- ▶ Jesus makes the point most clearly that marriage is the doing of God. Mark 10:6–9:
 - ▶ *"From the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female' [Genesis 1:27]*

▶ *'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'* [Genesis 2:24].

▶ So, they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."

▶ This is the clearest statement in the Bible that marriage is not merely a human doing. The words "God has joined together" means it is God's doing.

23 **Marriage is the Display of God**

▶ Ephesians 5:31-32 quotes Genesis 2:24 and then adds an interpretation to it.

▶ *"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh."* (This mystery is great, but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.) (Ephesians 5:31-32, LEB)

▶ Marriage is all about putting Christ's covenant on display for the world to see!

▶

24 **Colossians 3:6 -- God's wrath means we should change**

▶ *Therefore, put to death what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, uncleanness, lustful passion, evil desire, and greediness, which is idolatry, because of which the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience,* (Colossians 3:5-6, LEB)

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25 **But God's wrath was satisfied by Jesus**

And although you were dead in the trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, he made you alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, having destroyed the certificate of indebtedness in ordinances against us, which was hostile to us, and removed it out of the way by nailing it to the cross. (Colossians 2:13-14, LEB)

26 **So what?**

▶ So God's wrath upon our sins was taken care of by the sacrifice of Jesus upon the cross, nearly 2000 years ago.

▶ God did it FOR us and OUTSIDE of us before we were ever born!

▶ *And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.* (Ephesians 4:32, KJV 1900)

▶ *And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.* (Ephesians 5:2, KJV 1900)

27 **A funny thing happened to me on the way home from the symphony....**

2 Are you the wrong spouse?

28 **How to be the right spouse**

29 **Colossians 3:12-13**

Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. (Colossians 3:12-13, KJV 1900)

▶ As God has forgiven you, you must forgive your spouse.

▶ As God forbears with you, you must forebear your spouse.

▶ These are the commands of God!

30 **You and your spouse are imperfect**

- ▶ So, it is inevitable that you will let one another down
- ▶ There will be conflict based upon sin and strangeness (and you might not even agree what is sinful and strange between the two of you).
- ▶ The hard work of enduring and forgiving is what makes it possible for affections to flourish when they seem to have died.
- ▶ God gets the glory when two very different and imperfect people forge a life of faithfulness in the furnace of affliction by relying on Christ.

31 **Three inward conditions**

1. Compassionate hearts and kindness
2. Humility and meekness
3. Patience and forbearance

32 **"Bowels of mercies" produce kindness**

- ▶ 'Compassionate hearts' is the modern translation of the phrase 'bowels of mercy.'
- ▶ When your inmost being is full of mercy, that becomes the good ground that grows the fruit of kindness.
 - ▶ So, each spouse needs to sink their roots by faith into Christ and the gospel until you become a more merciful person.
 - ▶ Then you can treat one another out of this tender mercy with kindness.
 - ▶ The battle is that our flesh tends to be unmerciful. Be amazed and stunned by the depth of God's mercy toward you and then you can more easily be kind to others.

33 **Humility produces meekness**

Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; (Colossians 3:12, KJV 1900)

- ▶ Humility or loneliness is an inward condition. Meekness – not demanding your own rights or treating others above yourself – is the outward demeanor.
 - ▶ People whose hearts are lowly instead of proud act more meekly toward others. They serve others.
 - ▶ Each husband and each wife should seek their roots into the gospel until we become more lowly and humble.
 - ▶ What Christ did for us on the cross should break our pride in our sense of rightful demands in our frustration in not getting her own way. When it works loneliness into our souls, then we will treat one another with meekness.
 - ▶ The battle is our proud, self-centered interpersonal.

▶

34 **Long-suffering produces forbearance and forgiveness**

Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. (Colossians 3:12–13, KJV 1900)

35 **Long-suffering produces forbearance and forgiveness**

- ▶ The inner condition here is patience or long-suffering.
 - ▶ This inner condition produces two outward actions: forbearing and forgiving.
- ▶ The word "forebear" means to endure one another.
 - ▶ *And Jesus answering said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and*

suffer you? Bring thy son hither. (Luke 9:41, KJV 1900)

▶ *... and we toil, working with our own hands. When we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure; (1 Corinthians 4:12, LEB)*



36 **Forgiveness is active**

▶ There are two words in the New Testament for "forgive." They both come from the same root word which is "grace."

▶ The one used here means to freely or graciously give. The idea is that when we forgive, we do not exact payment.

▶ We treat people better than they deserve.

▶ When you forgive someone who has wronged you it might seem that they are in debt to you and justice would say that you have a right to expect some suffering or payment for the suffering they caused you.

▶ But forgiveness does not demand a payment but freely gives good for evil.

37 **Forgiveness goes the extra mile**

▶ *"But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, (Luke 6:27, LEB)*

▶ *See to it that no one pays back evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue good toward one another and toward all people. (1 Thessalonians 5:15, LEB)*

▶ *and we toil, working with our own hands. When we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure; (1 Corinthians 4:12, LEB)*



38 **John Piper**

▶ Now what I find so helpful here is that Paul recognizes that both forgiving and forbearing are crucial for life together—whether in church or marriage.

▶ Forgiveness says: I will not treat you badly because of your sins against me or your annoying habits.

▶ And forbearance acknowledges (usually to itself): Those sins against me and those annoying habits really bother me or hurt me! I

▶ If there were nothing in the other person that really bothered us or hurt us, there would be no need for saying "endure one another."

39 **The compost pile and the cow-pies**

40 **Conclusion**

WILL YOU FOCUS ON THE COMPOST PILE OR THE PASTURE?