

**BIBLICAL MARRIAGE**  
***THE PRIORITY OF UNITY PT. 1***  
**SESSION 1A (VIDEO 1 OF 6)**

Introduction

A. Overview.

B. Hope for those tempted with hopelessness. For those who are struggling in marriage, you can take great hope.

1. God's Word is sufficient to address all of our problems (Rom. 15:4; 2 Pet. 1:3; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

2. God's grace is sufficient for all our needs (Phil. 4:19; 2 Cor. 12:9). The believer's sin is solvable (Rom. 5:20). God's Spirit can produce growth and change.

C. This class is for you and not just for your spouse. Profiting from this class is dependent upon being a doer of the word and not a hearer only (Jas. 1:22-25; Mt. 7:24-27). It is easy to listen, nod, and go on without change. Strike while the iron is hot. Sit down and prayerfully go through these outlines with your spouse during the week.

I. The Foundation of Biblical Marriage

A. Marriage is for the magnifying of God's glory (1 Cor. 10:31; Eph. 5:31-32). It sets before the world a model of Christ and the church, which displays the grace of God and defines marriage by the self-denying work of the cross. Many themes, such as sin, grace, forgiveness, God's wrath, unity, and love are central to understanding biblical marriage.

B. Marriage is a temporary calling (Mt. 22:30; Mk. 12:25). It is one way to serve Christ and exalt his praise, but it is not guaranteed in this life, whether due to sickness, death, or celibacy (1 Cor. 7). As with all God's gifts, we must always hold it loosely. Christ in the gospel of grace is our greatest gift (2 Cor. 9:15).

C. Marriage is a wonderful gift (Heb. 13:4; 1 Tim. 4:3; Prov. 5:18, 19).

D. Marriage must not become a self-serving idol.

1. Love for Christ must surpass love for any spouse (Lk. 14:26; 18:29-30; 1 Cor. 7:29). You love your spouse best by loving Christ most.

2. Whenever your spouse replaces Jesus, you forsake the fountain of living waters in exchange for a broken cistern (Jer. 2:13).

3. This is a source of marital strife. When you put your spouse in the place of Christ and expect them to supply what only the Lord can supply, then you will be hyper-sensitive to fluctuations of their love and become easily provoked when your spouse does not meet your expectations. If your endless supply of satisfying waters flows from Christ, then you will rejoice when Christ uses your spouse to express His love to you – without putting your spouse in Christ's place. When your spouse hurts or disappoints you, and Christ is the object of your joy, then your source of happiness remains uninterrupted.

E. The condition of your marriage to Christ will directly influence the outworking of your marriage to your spouse.

1. If your relationship with Christ is not strong, your marriage will not be strong. It is a beautiful, Christ-magnifying display when both spouses are living faithful to their Lord.
2. Even if your spouse is unwilling to pursue Christ to the same degree as yourself, you can live an abundantly blessed life (full of love, joy, and peace) and bring glory to God, if your marriage to Christ is preeminent.

## II. God's Design for Marriage.

- A. Primary: Companionship (Gen. 2:18, 24; Prov. 2:17; Mal. 2:14).
- B. Secondary
  1. Procreation (Gen. 2:27-28).
  2. Propagation of covenant seed in the Church (Mal. 2:15; Ps. 127:3-5).
  3. Preventing lust and fornication (1 Cor. 7:2, 9).
- C. "Marriage was ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife; for the increase of mankind with a legitimate issue, and of the church with an holy seed; and for prevention of uncleanness." (*Westminster Confession* 24.2)

## III. The *First Priority* of Marriage: Unity, Oneness, Togetherness.

- A. This is true of the supreme model of marriage – Christ and His bride, the Church (Eph. 5:30-32).
- B. It is specifically prescribed in Scripture (1 Pet. 3:7; Mal. 2:15-16; Eph. 5:22-33)
- C. It is illustrated physically in the consummating act of marriage (Gen. 2:24-25; Matt. 19:5-6).

## IV. Cultivating Unity.

- A. Unity → Trust → Openness.
  1. Wholehearted *trust* is the foundation of unity in every relationship
    - a. the believer's relationship with Christ – trust (i.e., faith) in Him.
    - b. common Christian friendships (e.g., David and Jonathan in 1 Sam. 18:1-4/19:1ff).
    - c. in marriage itself (Prov. 31:11).
  2. Trust is guarded in marriage by *openness* and *honesty*.
- B. Loving your spouse is required of both husbands (Eph. 5:25, 28, 33; Col. 3:19) and wives (Tit. 2:4).
  1. Love does not assume evil or impute motives (1 Cor. 13:5, 7). If you assume anything, assume the best. Otherwise, ask. Countless problems could be avoided by simply recognizing that you did not know what your spouse was thinking or feeling (!), despite your persuasion to the contrary.
  2. Love is not something you fall into. Love is a commitment to give one's life for another. Why are some people googly-eyed about the prospects of marriage? Is it so that they will be cherished, respected, and have the exclusive affection and attention of someone, or is it to give up their life in the service of someone else? Do we choose a spouse on the

basis of who makes us feel good about ourselves or on the basis of godliness and a like-minded pursuit of God's glory together?

C. Lust is consumed with *getting*. Love is a commitment to *giving*, sometimes irrespective of feelings or emotions. Lust says, "I want for myself." Love says, "I will sacrifice for my spouse." To mortify lust we must dethrone self. We are to find our joy in bringing joy to our spouse.

1. Notice the relationship of love and giving in Scripture (e.g., Eph. 5:2, 25; Gal. 2:20; Jn. 3:16). Make it a habit to be constantly looking to "give" of yourself to one another (time, listening, words, gifts, physically, emotion, thought, serving, etc.).

2. Love does not seek one's own (1 Cor. 13:5). We should not love in order to be loved back. Imagine the marriage where each spouse is devoted 100% to doing everything in their power to bring joy to the other and 0% to watching out for themselves. That is the kind of self-denial to which God is calling you (Phil. 2:20-21). If both have this as a goal, it is heaven on earth.

3. It is also a majestic display of the glory of Christ and his gospel. Christ withheld nothing. He gave all for his Bride (Phil. 2:4ff). The Church is called upon to withhold nothing. We are to give all for our Heavenly Husband (2 Cor. 5:15; Rom. 14:8).

D. If the essence of love is "giving" to others, then we need to learn how to express love effectively. In other words, it is essential that you know how others like to receive love – not how you enjoy expressing it most yourself.

1. This is another form of self-denial and finding your joy by producing joy in the object of your love.

2. This is also an aspect of "knowing" your spouse.

3. Love can be expressed in *thousands* of ways, not all of which are equally meaningful to everyone. For example it can include:

- a. Serving, helping, doing projects/tasks, etc.

- b. Physical contact, snuggles, holding hands, etc.

- c. Giving cards, gifts, surprises, notes, etc.

- d. Verbal expression of appreciation, admiration, etc.

- e. Spending time together, going places, just sitting, etc.

- f. Loyalty and faithfulness.

- g. Many others.