

Husbands and Wives – Part 1

Introduction

a. objectives

1. subject – Paul outlines what it means to be mutually submissive as husbands and wives
2. aim – to cause us to pursue submissiveness in every area of our lives as followers of Christ
3. passage – Ephesians 5:22-33

b. outline

1. The Sacredness of Marriage
2. The Submission of Wives (Ephesians 5:22-24)
3. The Self-Sacrifice of Husbands (Ephesians 5:25-33)

c. opening

1. the **centrality** of human relationship in the *Imago Dei*
 - a. **e.g.** the introvert, the concept of *solitary confinement*
 - b. the statement by God that it was not “good for the man to be alone” (**Genesis 2:18**)
 1. even though Adam had God, animals, and angels all around him
 2. the formation of Eve as a *peer* relationship to Adam – someone *like him* to relate to
 - c. **i.e.** flowing out of the perfectly loving, eternal relationship within the Persons of the Trinity
2. the **outline** of human relationship in Ephesians
 - a. the **prevailing** way to outline this book (**by indicative/imperative**)
 1. **chaps. 1-3** = the decree of God to purpose a people for himself, to call them out of their rebellion, and to build them up together into a temple that would glorify him before all creation
 2. **chaps. 4-5a** = the first imperative to the church: love one another in a grand unity in Christ, walking with one another as those who have been radically transformed, having shed the old self, putting on the new nature of Christ as we shun the darkness in which we used to live
 - b. the **relational** way to outline this book (**by human relationship**)
 1. **chaps. 1-3** – the relationship of believers **to God (vertically)**: his work to carve out for himself a people to call his own, declaring them to be his children, drawing them to himself in faith, and establishing them together as his own family under their elder brother, Jesus Christ
 2. **chaps. 4-5a** = the relationship of believers **to one another (horizontally)**: the reality of our love for one another having been transformed into the children of God, walking side-by-side in unity as those in a common family, no longer acting like those outside of that family
 3. **chaps. 5b-6** = the relationship of believers **to others (connectedly)**: the reach of our love for Christ as it permeates all other “classes” of human relationship, as we strive to apply our new status in God’s family to all other kinds of human contact “outside” (beyond) the church
 - a. husbands and wives – the *marital* relationship; children and parents – the *nuclear family* relationship; slaves and masters – the *economic* relationship (**to be defined**); the unregenerate – the relationship with the *worldly*
 - b. so, Paul **continues** the thought of how we are to live *in human relationship* (at the core of our existence) by moving to a discussion of other “classes” of relationship that we will need to deal with as followers of Christ
3. the **worldview** of Paul regarding marriage as a human relationship
 - a. **truth #1**: Paul (undoubtedly) had a worldview regarding marriage; a foundational understanding of the significance of marriage in this world – even though he *does not* flesh that out here
 1. **i.e.** the statements made here are *clearly* from an overarching sense of marriage
 2. **i.e.** flowing from the worldview of marriage inherent in the *inspiring* Spirit of God
 3. **i.e.** you can piece together his view of marriage from here, **Romans 7**, and **1 Corinthians 7**
 - b. **truth #2**: Paul delivers his imperatives here under the authority of his view of marriage
 1. **e.g.** Paul commands wives to submit to their husbands from the *creation mandate* of order
 - c. **conclusion**: therefore, we would do well to explore a biblical worldview re: marriage in order to fully understand the *basis* under which Paul labors here (**see the next two weeks**)

I. The Sacredness of Marriage

Content

a. marriage is a universal institution

1. marriage has existed in every human civilization, a *core* institution in virtually every human society
2. marriage has been a *universally* understood *social* and *cultural* concept

b. marriage is a mixture of secular and religious interests

1. **reality:** marriage is *not* primarily a “Christian” institution, nor is it primarily a “religious” one
 - a. marriage preexisted Israelite history (by >1000 years), and Christianity by several thousand years
 - b. marriages continue to be sanctioned *outside* the church for the non-religious (**i.e.** by the state)
2. **reality:** marriage is (in general) a **mixture** of both *secular* and *religious* interests
 - a. secular: the stability and longevity of a society can be traced to its basic family unit (via marriage)
 - b. religious: the promulgation of morality and the control of human sexuality along with its dangers

c. marriage is a theological concept (within redemptive history)

1. **question:** if marriage is an *ancient* institution, and *common* to the entire civilized world, then *where* do we find a *specific* definition of it, and where do we find its *larger* purpose (genesis) articulated?
2. **marriage is a theological idea, established by God at the outset of humanity, integral to (redemptive) history as the very foundation of civilization itself (a creation ordinance)**
 - a. **note:** marriage is included in the 1689 Confession as an aspect of **faith** and central to **Baptist** life

d. marriage is a creative act of God (Genesis 2:18-24)

1. the formation of **Adam** in the **Genesis 2** account
 - a. God forms Adam from the dust of the ground and makes him a “*living being*” (**vv. 1-8**)
 - b. God places Adam in the Garden to maintain it (**vv. 15-17**)
 - c. God says “*it is not good for the man to be alone*” (**v. 18**) – a strange statement!
 - d. **IOW:** there is no one on the same *strata* (or *level*) as Adam
 1. Adam needed a “*helper*” – not just to tend the Garden, but to *fulfill* his existence
2. the formation of **Eve** in the **Genesis 2** account
 - a. God forms Eve from a “*rib*” of Adam (**vv. 21-22**)
 1. he does not create a *new* creature from the dust of the ground; he “*extends*” Adam
 2. he forms a creature **similar** to Adam, yet **different** from him
3. the formation of **marriage** in the **Genesis 2** account
 - a. **v. 24** becomes the *definition* of marriage – God gives Eve to Adam to *fulfill* his existence
 1. the “*therefore*” of v. 24 indicates the *conclusion* (or *purpose*) of God creating Eve
 2. *why* do people get married? as a *completion* of the divine purpose for humanity
 - b. the *core* of marriage being: “... *they shall become one flesh*”
 1. **thesis: marriage is the creative act of God in which he forms a new creature from two separate and different persons in the image of God himself to fulfill his divine purpose**
 - a. we call this *new creature* “Mr. and Mrs.” or “husband and wife” at the wedding
 2. the parallels to the image of the Godhead in this *creative act* (one nature, distinct persons)
 - a. Paul quotes **Genesis 2:24** in speaking of this “*one flesh*” unity in **Eph. 5:28-31**
 3. by creating Eve *similar* to Adam (yet *different*), and then joining her to Adam as his wife, God *formed* a new creature as a picture of the triune God *and as the basis for human civilization*

e. marriage is a creation ordinance (Genesis 1:27-28)

1. **i.e.** foundational to the very *existence* of humanity
2. the **larger purpose** of God in marriage (**i.e.** the *creation ordinance*; **Genesis 1:27-28**)
 - a. the creation (and marriage) of “*male and female*” (**v. 27**) is to *obey* the following commands:
 - b. **command #1:** be “*fruitful and multiply*” – *procreate* and reproduce the race (**success!!**)
 - c. **command #2:** “*subdue*” the earth and take “*dominion*” over all other creatures
 1. for the establishment of *human civilization* (**i.e.** the care and feeding of humanity)
 2. for the establishment of *order* and *lawfulness* (**i.e.** the subjugation of Satan)
3. **thesis: marriage is a central part of the creation ordinance, at the heart of the dominion of humanity over this planet in accordance with God’s purposes throughout**
 - a. **IOW:** any other “*view*” of marriage that defines the union differently or fails to take into account these two *creation mandates* fails the test of authenticity

f. marriage is a covenant relationship (Malachi 2:13-16)

1. **i.e.** a relationship of *promise* illustrating God's promise-keeping nature
2. **thesis: marriage is a covenant between a man and a woman, authorized by God himself, and held to the same standards that God makes in his covenant relationships**
 - a. the standard of *promise* (a "covenant"; **Mal. 2:14**) – something promised on oath
 - b. the standard of *witness* (God "was witness"; **Mal. 2:14**) – something witnessed and signed
 - c. the standard of *faithfulness* (contra "faithless"; **Mal. 2:15**) – something permanent
 - d. the standard of *completion* ("godly offspring"; **Mal. 2:15**) – something resulting from it
3. the **ultimate** covenant is the one God has made with his elect
 - a. marriage is (by definition) a three-way covenant (God → the man → the woman)
 - b. marriage *foreshadows* the three-way covenant of the elect (Father → Son → elect)

g. marriage is a culminating act

1. **definition: the life-long, monogamous, heterosexual, covenantal, and divine union between a man and a woman for the purpose of:**
 - a. establishing *human civilization* – in the creation mandate
 - b. picturing his own *personal nature* – in the creative act of one-flesh unions
 - c. foreshadowing his *unique relationship with those he would redeem* – in the covenant