

Introduction: this section important because of several reasons

- 1.) Most counseling and problems within the church are connected with marriage; this is true on a relational, and individual level
- 2.) Most will be or are in a marriage; you do not want to years into a marriage and realize that the goals are different, or that you have been building in vain; this helps with finding a potential spouse; this will be remedial for many, as no one has a perfect marriage
- 3.) Even those who will never be married are to understand and benefit from, the Bible’s teaching on marriage; all Scripture is God-breathed, and there are things that are not only applicable to a couple, but also general relationships
- 4.) We live in a culture grossly devoid of biblical thinking on the topic of marriage; as goes the family, so goes the culture
- 5.) We live in a culture in which marriages largely fail, and one’s that exist are frequently difficult or miserable (can be a living heaven or hell)

## I. A CREATION BLESSING – Genesis 2:18-25

- Started by a God who is loving, kind and merciful; declared it “very good” – Gen1, 2
- Given in response to man’s need for a helper – Gen2:18 1Cor11:9
- Continually exalted in Scripture – Proverbs 31:10-12 18:22 12:4 Heb13:4 Eph5
- If you talk about marriage as a positive, you will think about it as positive; “jokes” about it not appropriate
- 1Cor7 – One place where there seems to be a “negative” connotation

## II. A TWO-FOLD PROCESS – Genesis 2:24

### A. Leaving

- Does not mean abandon, forsake, or disregard (1Tim5:8), or necessarily a geographical move
- Moving out of the position of submission of their authority, and them being counselors
- Some of the problems couples face is lacking this leaving element, and parents expectations, desires, and displeasure become intruding factors

### B. Cleaving

- Means to “weld together”
- The basis of marriage is covenant commitment (Prov2:17 Mal2:14)
- Departure from two different “cultures” and creating of a new one
- An incubator for raising a next generation of believers in Christ; very influential on them
- This is a relationship that is more permanent than the parent/child relationship (with their parents and children) Mt19:6 man is not to separate; cannot be done without damage
- This means working as a unit or team; to have same goals and motives; what is the purpose of this marriage?
- We should ask “What is the purpose of our family?”
- This is to be the primary influence for several areas of development;
- Cultivate – improve and prepare, promote growth, nurture, foster, form, refine
- These things are true not just with children, but the couple as well
  - (1.) Mental – Cultivating the mind to think biblically about the world.
  - (2.) Emotional – Cultivating the emotions to be used in a God-glorifying way.
  - (3.) Physical – Cultivating a proper stewardship of the body.
  - (4.) Relational – Cultivating biblical thinking and actions of love and conflict resolution.
  - (5.) Creative – Cultivating the imagination.
  - (6.) Spiritual – Cultivating a heart for God and for His Word.
- Being raised in an context where these things are lacking, there will be serious deformities
- We cripple our children and fail at God’s purpose for marriage and family when we do not do these things

*“The Family is to be a God-Saturated, Scripturally-Controlled Incubator for the Development of the Whole Person Created in the Image of God for the worship of God”*

- even when someone lacked this growing up, marriage is to cultivate these things and be corrective

## III. A PORTRAIT – Ephesians 5:23, 32

- First and foremost a combined portrait of the image of God – Gen1:26-27

### A. The Husband is a Portrait of Christ

1. As head, he is to the most responsible (v.23)

2. As **savior**, he is to be the most **sacrificial** (v.23)

3. As **lover**, he is to be the most **giving** (v.25)

- Immediate needs (v.26) long-term goals (v.27) encourages reciprocal love (5:28-30)
- Husband itself is a term used for the cultivation of agriculture or livestock
- This is not only what he should be, but what he is; he is either a good one or a bad one

**B. The Wife Is a Portrait of the Church**

1. **Being submissive** (v.22)

2. **In everything** (v.24)

3. **Cooperating with his goals for her** (vv.27-28)

4. **Respecting her husband** (v.33)

- This does not destroy her individuality, but functions as in the role of helper, recognizing that the man is ultimately responsible for family decisions
- Divorce and the things that lead to it destroys the portrait; but it isn't just a "negative", "sticking it out" out of obedience
- Two people can stick together and still fail at these vital points; there should be the pursuit of the positive elements
- As God sanctifies each individual, they are able to reflect more of this portrait
- We who are married should ask the question, "is our marriage an increasingly accurate display of this portrait?"