

6 Reasons Why Marriage Shouldn't Be Demeaned

Whatever state you're in—married, single, divorced, or widowed—the Bible commands everyone to honor marriage. The Bible says in Hebrews 13:4, *"Marriage should be honored by everyone."* Everyone, married or not, should honor earth's oldest institution.

Sadly, marriage is no longer honored by everyone in our society. Today, marriage is dismissed as irrelevant by many people. It's demeaned by many people. People are delaying marriage more and more—many times for the wrong reasons. And marriage is being redefined. It's being ridiculed. It's being demeaned. It's being denounced. It's being discouraged. Marriage is disrespected.

Part of the problem is that nobody knows the basics of marriage any more. God gave us marriage and He expects the church to stand for it and to support it. Most people don't know why marriage matters. As we teach from the Scriptures about marriage, there are at least six divine purposes for marriage to communicate.

1. God gave marriage for the connection of men and women.

First Corinthians 11:11 says, *"In God's plan men and women need each other."*

God wired it this way. God thought up gender. God thought up sex. What a God! And God thought up marriage. The Bible says this in Genesis 2:18 *"It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a companion who is right for him."* You need companions in all different areas. But there is nothing like the companionship of a marriage.

Mark 10 says, *"God's plan has been seen from the beginning of creation, when he made us male and female. [God made males,*

God made females. And God chose what he wanted you to be.] *This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united as one body. Now since they are no longer two but one, [God sees a married couple as one] no one should separate them, for GOD has joined them together.*" That passage says three things.

- Marriage is God's plan. It's not a tradition we can just throw out. God invented marriage when he invented you, when he invented me, when he invented humanity. Marriage is God's plan.
- Marriage is between a man and a woman. There are a lot of other relationships, but those aren't marriage.
- Marriage is to be permanent. What God joins together—God joins a couple in marriage—no one, no one else, should separate. It's meant to be permanent. It's meant to be for life.

2. God created marriage for the multiplication of the human race. God chose to populate the human planet through marriage. For thousands of years billions of people have come into existence because men and women got married. God chose for everybody who's going to be in heaven to come into existence through marriage and sex.

Malachi 2:15 in the Message paraphrase says, *"God, NOT YOU, made marriage! His Spirit inhabits even the smallest details of marriage. And what does he want from marriage? Godly children from your union. So guard the spirit of marriage within you."*

If you're married and you can't have kids, God is not disappointed in you. That's not what this verse is saying. What it is saying is that we're all alive because some couple got together. For thousands of years God has used marriage to populate heaven. And if men and women weren't getting together, marrying and having sex then there would be nobody in heaven.

3. God created marriage for the protection of children. God invented marriage for the protection of children. We all know that kids grow better, healthier and stronger when they grow up in a stable family with a mom and a dad. God knew that human children needed a safe environment. And you were going to need somebody to feed you and dress you and nurture you. You were going to need somebody to protect you, to guide you, to train you, to care for you and all these things.

That's why at Saddleback we don't believe in orphanages. We don't fund orphanages. We don't build orphanages. Why? Because no kid deserves to grow up in an institution. They deserve to grow up in a family. It's more important to help finance a family to take that child in. Proverbs 14:26 says, *"Those who obey and respect the Lord have a secure fortress; their children have a place of refuge and security."* Kids need to be able to grow up in a home that is a refuge.

4. God created marriage for the perfection of our character. It is in relationships that we learn to be unselfish and to be loving. And no relationship has a greater impact on your life than marriage, if you get married. Maturity and the purpose of life is to grow up and realize it's not all about you. Life is a laboratory of learning how to love. Why is love the most important thing in life? Because God is love. And God wants you to become like him. He wants you to learn how to love. We learn to love and learn to be unselfish.

The Bible says this in Proverbs 18:1 *"It's selfish and stupid to think only of yourself."* Marriage is a lifelong course in learning to be unselfish because once I get married, I can no longer think about *me*. I've got to think about *we*.

The No. 1 tool that God uses in your life to build Christ-like character if you are married is your spouse. *Oh no!* Yep! It's because every day you get hundreds of opportunities to not think about you. You get opportunities to think of the other person, to care about them. The number one purpose of marriage

is to make me holy, not happy. That is counter-cultural, but it is the truth.

5. God created marriage for the construction of society.

Marriage is the fundamental building block of every community, church, state, nation, society and culture. If you know anything about history you know that where marriages are strong, cultures and nations are strong. You know that wherever marriages and families are weak, cultures and nations are in decline.

It's really obvious what direction our nation is headed right now. America is not getting better. It's not getting stronger. It's going the other direction. Why? It's because we don't value marriage and family any more. We value self way more than marriage. We've made individualism an idol. Proverbs 14:34 says, *"Righteousness [doing it God's way] lifts up a nation, but sin [not doing it God's way] brings disgrace to any society."*

6. God created marriage for the reflection of our union with Christ. Marriage is a metaphor. It is a symbol. It's a walking, living object lesson of how much God loves us and how we are to be in relationship with him. Marriage is a model of a profound spiritual truth.

Ephesians 5 says, *"Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her... He died so that he could give the church to himself as a Bride in all her beauty ... In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they love their own bodies... No one ever hates his own body, but feeds and takes care of it. And that is what Christ does for his church, his body. The Scripture says, 'a man is united with his wife, and the two become one body.' This is a profound mystery – but I am talking about Christ and the church! So each husband must love his wife as he loves himself, and each wife must respect her husband."*

No other relationship on planet earth, including the parent-child relationship, can adequately illustrate our union with Christ the way a marriage between a man and a woman does. This is the strongest reason why marriage cannot be redefined. This is the strongest reason why it must be protected at all cost. It's because we are the body of Christ.

We are the bride of Christ in union with Christ. And marriage is that metaphor.

It really doesn't matter what other people think about marriage. It doesn't matter what public opinion says. It doesn't matter what the opinion polls say. It doesn't matter what's politically correct or incorrect. What really matters is what God says. He's the One who invented marriage.

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