

# Gods Design for Marriage

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Preacher: Wayne Thiessen

- [ 0 : 00 ]     Good morning. It's a beautiful and blessed morning thus far.! And again, I rejoice that we have the freedom to be together again and to fellowship together.
- ! I really enjoyed the last song, Great is Your Faithfulness. And as we were singing, I thought to myself, do we really believe that?
- Great is Your faithfulness. I trust that we do. And I trust that God is growing our faith.
- And He's increasing it as we go through life. And so, just to loosen up, let's just hear from you.
- In what ways is God faithful? As a way of encouragement. How is God faithful in our lives?
- [ 1 : 20 ]     He sends the sunshine and the rain. We'll go here first. He sends the sunshine and the rain. Okay, He sends the sun and the rain. Over there.
- Oh, the same. Okay. Okay. Okay. Okay. So, He is in control of our environment. He provides for us.
- Okay. He promised the Savior and He followed through. Absolutely. Okay.
- I didn't get the first word. The abiding peace and joy that we have. Thank you. Yeah. So, as believers, we have that joy and peace within.
- He sent the Holy Spirit. And as promised, right?
- [ 2 : 37 ]     His unending love. God's faithfulness. He's a healer.
- Okay. And physically, spiritually, but God heals.
- He brings healing. Okay. Last night, we decided to come to the VBS meeting.
- And guess what I found? God's faithfulness in providing so many or so much help.
- And I inwardly praise the Lord for so many people that showed interest and that have committed already.
- [ 3 : 47 ]     And so now, as we sang that song, Great is Your Faithfulness, does God have a grade 8 teacher lined up? And is He faithful?
- Is He faithful? Is He faithful? And a craft teacher? Abe and Igor are probably all ears here now as VBS committee.
- But He does, right? And if it's you, God is waiting for you to say yes. To surrender to that call.
- But God is faithful. He has prepared and enabled. And so, yeah, thank you for that. It marks the community of faith.
- That we trust God because He is faithful. And the longer we go in life, the more we taste God's faithfulness.
- [ 4 : 56 ]     Amen? Amen? Amen. The longer we go, the more we see it. He provides time and time again. And Scripture says when we are faithless, God remains faithful.

Because that's who He is. So, praise the Lord. Amen. Thank you, Kevin, for reading the Scriptures this morning.

The message this morning, God's design for marriage. 1 Corinthians 7. It's going to be a multi-sermon series working through this because there's a lot there.

So, we're going to get started on it today. Today, God's design for marriage. It has in the past and continues to be very controversial around the subject of the permanence of marriage.

Does God allow divorce and remarriage? All those questions that churches wrestle with. And yet, we have this book to guide us.

[ 6 : 31 ] No more. There's lots and lots of books written out there. But we have the Scriptures. That is enough.

Yes. Thank you. Yeah. And so, we're going to start to work through it this morning. In chapter 6, we ended last Sunday with the teaching that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit.

And that we are bought and are a purchased possession of Jesus Christ.

Well, of God the Father through Jesus Christ. And therefore, what would flow out of that is that we then use or make our bodies a vessel for God's purposes.

And that we flee immorality and seek to honor God in our bodies as well.

[ 7 : 47 ] That's chapter 6. He brings out that awareness very clearly. So, chapter 7 is a long chapter. And so, we're going to start in that.

Now, it starts with a question. Now, concerning the things of which you wrote to me, it is good for a man not to touch a woman.

So, someone in the church of Corinth has written to Paul and informed him of questions and also some issues in the church.

But one of the questions is about whether, when we come to Christ, is it proper to get married? Is marriage really what God wants for us as believers?

Now, he's talking New Testament. So, now that Christ has died for our sins and we come to faith, what is life to be like in that regard?

[ 9 : 05 ] Now, a bit of background. In Corinth, there were a lot of issues of prostitution.

And there may very likely have been teaching of young men coming to Christ to practice celibacy.

To practice not getting married and staying single. But then, if God has not designed us to remain single, the urge to go to the temple for relief through prostitution.

So, there's issues like that in Corinth. And so, there's probably a depth of background here behind this question.

And they're looking for answers, what is proper. And so, Paul attempts to answer. Now, concerning the things of which you wrote to me.

[ 10 : 23 ] And then Paul says, it is good for a man not to touch a woman. Does this contradict God's teaching in the Old Testament?

Did God not say to Adam, it's not good for a man to be alone. I will make you a helpmeet comparable to you.

So that you don't have to be alone. And here Paul says, it's good for a man not to touch a woman. In other words, don't get married.

And as we work through this, we will see that Paul's drive is serving God.

That's his drive. And so, nonetheless, this is what he says. Verse 2, nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.

[ 11 : 33 ] So, Paul says, I think it's good if a man can survive without, or if he thrives without.

He does good. But because of immorality, and the word there is pornea, which very often, depending on context, is used of sexual relations prior to marriage.

But the full depth of the word, pornea, includes all aspects of immorality relating to sexual. And so, here he says, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.

Paul is saying, it is God-given that most of us have hormones that are driving us.

And it's better to marry than to burn with passion. And violate God's principles. And yet, Paul said, I would prefer if you could be like me.

[ 12 : 59 ] And he says that a few times. And so, again, his motive is to serve God full-heartedly without having his attention directed to a spouse.

Sidetracked. For we all know, all the marriage in the room here this morning, know that a healthy marriage takes a lot of time and effort to please our partner, to connect with our partners.

Emotionally, spiritually, physically, we need to build, and often we say, marriage is hard work as we learn to die to self.

So it takes a lot of our time and energy. Marriage does. And yet, having said that, it's the fulfillment of God's general plan for mankind.

So marriage. So verse 2 and onward, Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife and let each woman have her own husband.

[ 14 : 22 ] Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise, also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does, and likewise, the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.

Do not deprive one another, except with consent, for a time that you may give yourself or yourselves to fasting and prayer and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

Here we have an aspect of marriage and intimacy that goes beyond being fruitful and childbearing, and God has given that as a blessing in marriage.

So it's talking about intimacy between husband and wife. And Paul advocates it and he says that we are to freely give of each other, to not withhold that kind of intimacy, lest we be tempted to go outside of marriage.

And so, very clear teaching. Of course, what dictates that kind of thing is that that we we work out of love and intimacy, and it's always we have our our marriage partner in mind that we seek to fulfill their needs as well.

[ 16 : 27 ] And so it's under the principle of love, respect, and understanding. So Paul gives some guidelines here to a normal, healthy marriage and versus intimacy.

And so the concept in verse 5 that we don't deprive one another, that we don't have intimacy for an extended period, is and the only reason he gives here is if we have a spiritual battle and we're turning to God in fasting and prayer.

And we agree that for a certain amount of time, days, we will abstain. Beyond that, he says, we are not to defraud our partner or to hold back.

And so this is a very real component of a healthy marriage. And we need to recognize it as such.

As God has designed us for that and has thus instructed. Now, as we work through this, a lot of this will be directed at the marriage.

[ 17 : 58 ] But the unmarrieds, there's instruction here as well. And we can learn from this, and not only if marriage is going to be ahead of you, or whether God has called you to a life of celibacy.

That if that is the case, that we don't fight it, but rather embrace it, and have the heart and mindset of Paul that I want to serve the Lord, whether married or un.

And so if that need isn't there of relationship, then God may have called you to a life of celibacy to serve him more fully.

And of course, that would make Paul very happy, but God as well. And we need to just look at it that way. So then continuing, Paul says in verse 6, but I say this as a concession, not as a commandment.

And it's almost like Paul says, okay, if you can't control your desires, then get married. But I say that as a concession, like I'm willing to meet you halfway, kind of concept here.

[ 19 : 31 ] I would prefer if you stayed single, but I recognize that for most of us, this is not possible. So Paul is saying, I say this as a concession, not as a commandment.

And so it's not for everyone to get married, but for those who God has called to marriage. This is maybe a bit of a different aspect to it.

And if you're single here and older, you may have questioned God, what do you have for me? What is your plan regarding relationships, the nature of it?

And to embrace this with first and foremost, Lord, where do you want me to serve?

How? does that involve a partner or does it not? And to trust God to give direction, and if it's with a partner, that He will provide.

[ 20 : 48 ] Now, Paul says it's better that we pursue a partner if we have a burning desire for intimacy.

intimacy. It's better that we pursue and God will provide. So, in that sense, it's good for all of us, single or married, to grasp what Paul is saying here.

Verse 7, for I wish that all men were even as I myself, but each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that.

So, again, Paul says, I wish that all men were even as myself. Celibate. Now, I have a question. Was Paul married?

Johnny, I like the expression on your face. Not at the time of writing.

[ 22 : 12 ] Do you know what the answer is? We don't know. We don't know. not with certainty. But, Paul was a Pharisee, and as a rule, the Pharisees were married.

And, because of the Pharisees' zeal for piousness or for purity and so on, it was generally expected they had to be married.

Now, we can't say that with certainty, but that was the norm. And, and there's also some thought that he may have been part of the Sanhedrin, the ruling party, which also would have required marriage.

marriage. So, it puts some thoughts into our minds, not that it's critically important, but I found a lot of the commentaries, they believe quite firmly that Paul likely was married at one point in his life.

faith. And, one of them is F.F. Bruce, a commentator that has long gone to be with the Lord, but well respected.

[ 23 : 49 ] And, and he, he says with, not with full certainty, but quite sure, likely Paul was married. And, another one was William Barclay, and I thought I'd, I'd read a little bit what he says here.

William Barclay, we may be fairly certain that at some time Paul had been married. We may be certain of that on general grounds he was a rabbi, and it was his own claim that he had failed in none of the duties which Jewish law and tradition lay down.

Now, Orthodox Jewish belief laid down the obligation of marriage. If a man did not marry and have children, he was said to have slain his posterity, to have lessened the image of God in the world.

And so there's that aspect of it. A Jew who has no wife, who has a wife but no children, God has said be fruitful and multiply and therefore not to marry and not to have children was to be guilty of breaking God's commandments.

The age for marriage was considered to be 18 and therefore it is in the highest degree unlikely that so devout and orthodox a Jew as Paul once was would have been remained unmarried.

[ 25 : 20 ] On particular grounds, there's also evidence that Paul was married. He must have been a member of the Sanhedrin for he say that he gave his vote against the Christians, Acts 26 verse 10.

It was a regulation that the members of the Sanhedrin must be married because it was held that married men were more merciful. It may be that Paul's wife died or it is even more likely that she left him and broke up his home when he became a Christian so that he did indeed literally give up all things for the sake of Christ.

So there's some thoughts from various scholars that there is a likelihood that Paul may have been married. Right.

Right. And so, yeah, if Paul was married, of course it was when he was young, and if that was the case, it was either his wife died or, like we'll have later in the chapter, in verse 14 and on, that when one partner comes to faith and the unbelieving is unwilling to live with them, they're free to go.

And we'll cover that in the next message. And so if that was the case, Paul's wife, when he accepted Christ on the road to Damascus, that his wife may have left him.

[ 27 : 01 ] I'm not willing to live with you, a traitor to the Jewish law. That's how the Orthodox Jews would have viewed Paul, a traitor, heresy.

and with that, she may have said, I want no part of you. Now, like I said, we cannot say with certainty, and we need to let go of it.

But how Paul is written, 1 Corinthians, there seems to be understanding from both sides. And so he may have tasted both sides as well.

So as we close this morning, I want to just finish with the concept of celibacy.

And let's turn to Matthew 19. Matthew 19.

[ 28 : 28 ] And I'm going to read the entire account from verse 3 through 12. And we're going to have this as our last thought here. the Pharisees also came to him, testing him, and saying to him, is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?

And he answered and said to them, have you not read that he who made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh?

So then they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.

And they said to him, why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce and put her away? And he said to them, Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.

And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife except for sexual immorality, pornea, and marries another commits adultery, and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.

[ 29 : 54 ] So Jesus is laying that out, and in the next message we're going to dig into this portion deeper. But his disciples answered and said to him, if such is the case of the man with his wife, it is better not to marry.

If this is God's plan that Jesus says goes back to the beginning, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and let not man separate them.

God has joined together. And the disciples come back and say, if God, if that is his plan, that marriage is for life, there's no way out, then it is better for a man not to marry.

God and Jesus answers in verse 11 and 12. He says, all cannot accept this saying, but only those to whom it has been given.

For there are eunuchs who have been born from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake.

[ 31 : 24 ] He who is able to accept it, let him accept it. And I trust we all know what a eunuch is.

It is a man that has been operated on so that he cannot have children. And Jesus says, there are such that were born with a disability, unable to have children, and therefore unlikely to marry.

There are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men. Now, that's unfair and unfortunate.

By the way, in Scripture, Daniel is one of these. As captives from Israel taken to Babylon, the select choice young men from royal descent, and Daniel was one of them, descending from the kings of Israel.

And he was made a eunuch. And he spent as a young man, likely in his teens, taken to captivity into a country several thousand miles away into a foreign culture, language, turned into a eunuch, and God used him mightily.

[ 33 : 23 ] And we nowhere read that Daniel had a bad attitude, or said, this is unfair. He may have struggled and worked through it, likely, but in the end, he acknowledged God in the picture.

And he was a man of God, of wisdom. And God used him to interpret dreams, to reveal much prophecy through this man who was a eunuch, who never had a wife.

And the reason they did this was that the king had servants that he knew would not mess with his wives.

He fixed them. That was the purpose. So, sometimes, Jesus says, there are eunuchs who are made eunuchs by men. And then the third category, and there are eunuchs who make themselves eunuchs for the kingdom's sake.

And that is not meant in the physical, but this is talking about men, and I think we can include ladies here, that recognize God's call on my life, and they have said, I am committed to a life of celibacy, to live without marriage, in order that I might further the kingdom of God, uninterrupted by marriage.

[ 35 : 12 ] the teaching of Jesus Christ. So, I am not up here advocating celibacy,!

Or, marriage, but rather the will of God. and for most of us, it will be marriage, and has been.

And so, I firmly believe, for those that are, have chosen celibacy, it is a gift from God.

It's to be recognized as a gift, that the need to be married isn't there. It's a gift. It's not a curse, it's a gift. So, it's maybe a little bit different way of looking at things than sometimes we have.

And so, but ultimately, it is my relationship with my Heavenly Father, and His direction, in my life. So, we're going to leave it for this Sunday, but I trust the Lord will bless us as we go through this teaching.

[ 36 : 37 ] Pastor Henry's on next time, next Sunday, but in two weeks I will continue on from where we left off. And I recognize this is a hard teaching, but we want to follow the Bible and no more.

And we will not go astray. So, thank you. Let us close in prayer. Thank you, Father, for designing us in your image.

Thank you for making us relational, part of being in your image. And, Father, as well, that you have called many to marriage, but some to celibacy.

But always, Lord, it is out of relationship with you. It's for the purpose of serving you, for furthering your kingdom, whether married or unmarried.

So, Father, may that be our goal regardless. And so, we want to commit ourselves to you, and Lord, and I pray that if there's anyone here this morning that's struggling, either in marriage or a single, that they would turn to you with this and just ask for direction.

[ 38 : 13 ] Father, may you be glorified in Jesus' name. Amen.