

LESSON 12 - MARRIAGE

A Sacred Institution, Designed by God, to Make You Both More Like Jesus

By Brian S. Holmes

Copyright © 2021. Brian S. Holmes. MPowered Christian Ministries. All rights reserved. <https://MPoweredChristian.org>

Excerpted from: Holmes, Brian. "[Driveway Discipleship](#)" [The Empowered Christian Series] Clearwater, FL: MPowered Christian Publishing, 2021.

Permission for reuse by ABNSat, Trinity Channel, and their affiliates for use when provided free of charge.

Made available through a partnership with Missionary Church, Inc. <https://MCUSA.org>

Scripture quotations are from The ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.



Are you married or seek to one day get married? Marriage is much more than a piece of paper, or just an agreement between two people who love each other and want to spend their lives together. In this lesson we'll examine what biblical Christian marriage is, what the purpose and goal of Christian marriage should be, and some ways Christian marriages should be different.

What is Biblical Christian Marriage? Biblical marriage is a binding agreement under both God and government. Biblical marriage is the personal vow of two people making the decision to sacrificially die to themselves so the two become one flesh. (see Genesis 2:18-24). In Matthew 19:3-12 Jesus gave a teaching about marriage. Verse 6 says, "*So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.*" The uniting of the physical flesh happens when the two bodies become one sexually and it also happens spiritually within their souls - as the two hearts, minds, emotions, desires, and lives connect. This *union* becomes a type of entity to cherish and support, and its needs actually become more important than the individual needs of either one of its constituents. I'm not suggesting the individuals' needs are unimportant, they're just less important than the union's. It's only through the continuous effort of both partners sacrificially meeting the needs of each other that the union itself will reach its highest potential. Biblical Christian marriage is a sacred institution, designed by God, to glorify Him as both people submit first to Him and then to one another. They sacrifice their selfish individualism to serve God, and to serve the needs of each other in ways that please God, through it.

The Purpose and Goal of Christian Marriage. Everything exists to give God glory. God is most glorified through Jesus/Gospel, and we exist to glorify God through our faith in Jesus and our transformation into His likeness. Romans 8:29 and Colossians 1:18 say, respectively, God predestined us "*to be conformed to the image of his Son,*" ... "*so that in all things He may have preeminence.*" Marriage is no different. It exists to be used to glorify God and develop our relationship of trust with God. It also points to and magnifies Jesus, and helps us become more like Him. Both marriage and singleness accomplish this same goal in different ways but marriage is a unique institution available only to humans and only in this current age. In Luke 20:34-35 Jesus says in the life to come we aren't resurrected still married or continue to get married. Benefits, like companionship and pleasure, available through all personal relationships, have even greater potential in marriage. The very institution of marriage is a *picture* of Christ and the Church, with Jesus as the groom and all of the Church,

collectively, as His bride. Ephesians 5:31-32 says, “*Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.*” Jesus uses the marriage metaphor in Matthew 22:1-14, 25:1-13, and 9:14-16. Revelation 19:7 describes Christ’s return and the culmination of all things as a wedding, saying, “*Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready.*” When spouses are Christlike towards one another it reflects this picture well, and when they’re not, it reflects this picture poorly. Ephesians 5:23 says, “*Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.*” Wives are to submit in love and trust to their husbands the way the church submits in love and trust to Christ. It’s her love and commitment to Christ *first*, and both spouses’ ongoing growth in Christlikeness, that empowers her desire and ability to submit to her husband in this way. Likewise, verses 25-29 say, “*Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her... so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body.*” Husbands are to die to their own flesh and selfish pursuits and sacrificially love their wives the way Christ loved and died for the church. Husbands are to be Christlike leaders of the marriage union, whose purpose is to build up both partners in godliness as both put Christ first, allowing Him to guide them in everything else. If either spouse falls into sin, the other’s obligation is to obey Christ first and continue doing what is good, while loving, supporting, and helping the other to get back up. When both do their part, both the union and the individuals will be strong and glorious. And this then beautifully pictures Christ and the Church.

What Christian Marriage Should Look Like. Gary Thomas’ book *Sacred Marriage* put it like this: God intended marriage to make us *holy*, more than happy. The people of the sinful world see marriage as a way to *get* happy. A way to *get* pleasure. A way to go from lonely to *getting* companionship. A way to go from selfishly meeting your own needs to *getting* yours met by someone else. Though usually disguised deep under expressions of emotional, sentimental love, under the surface often lies selfishness and hedonism. It’s about *getting* what *they* want *from* the other. This is why the divorce rate is high. As soon as a spouse stops getting what they want or expect, they leave, seeking another who will give them what they want. By contrast, Christian marriage is about learning to *give*. It’s about *serving* the other. It’s about selflessly and sacrificially loving one other. It’s not about receiving, but giving. It’s not about whether or not both “*feel emotional love*” but about their “*commitment to give sacrificial love.*” Next, it’s about “being Christ-followers,” together. It’s a partnership for growing each of your relationships with the Lord together, becoming sanctified together, growing spiritually together, and serving the Lord in both of your callings together. It’s about supporting, encouraging, helping, and building one another up.

Let’s pray. Heavenly Father, help me to lay down my life, and sacrificially love my current or future spouse. Lead me always by Your Spirit. Teach me to glorify You with everything I do. Help me embrace every opportunity marriage provides to grow closer to You and to become more like Jesus. Amen.