

³¹ “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” ³² This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. ³³ However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

WHAT IS GOD’S ORIGINAL DESIGN FOR MARRIAGE?

Big Idea:

- God ultimately designed marriage to be a reflection of the relationship between Christ and the church (**v32**).

Implication:

- The fact that God created marriage to be a picture of Christ’s relationship with the church means that earthly marriage is not ultimate goal of life.
- Marriage is only a pointer to the ultimate marriage between Christ and His bride.

Marriage is often over-glorified as the ultimate goal of life, but the reality is, it is only a shadow to point us to the ultimate fountain of love and joy, which is Christ.

* No spouse will ever be able to satisfy us in the way the Christ can because He is the ultimate husband that our souls were created for.

Main Point:

- God designed marriage to be a *covenant* relationship.

* *One man, one woman:*

- Paul in **v31** quotes from **Genesis 2:24**, which points back to the first marriage, instituted by God, between Adam and Eve.

* *What about polygamy in the OT?*

- While God allowed polygamy to exist, it was never encouraged, and almost always led to physical and/or spiritual trouble. Further, what is clear from Scripture is that God’s ideal and original design for marriage, is between one man and one woman.

Covenant:

- God designed marriage to be an unyielding covenant of love between a man and a woman.

- “hold fast” (**v31**)= “to cleave, cling to, or to be glued together.” Here the word implies a covenant or promise to be fully committed to one another.

* This is why at weddings, vows are made that are always covenantal and never conditional.

Implication:

- One of the *implications* of marriage being a covenant is that it means that marriage is not about what you can *get*, but about what you are willing to *give*.

- In marriage, we are promising to *give* unyielding, unwavering love, no matter what we *get* in return.

* The power to make and keep this “crazy” commitment lies in the reality that marriage is a reflection of Christ’s covenantal love for the church.

- To the degree that we understand and experience Christ’s love for us, is the degree that we will be able to make and keep our covenantal promise of love in marriage.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. This passage teaches us that God ultimately designed marriage to be a reflection of Christ's relationship with the church. One of the implications of this is that it means that marriage is not the ultimate goal in life, but rather marriage to Christ is. In what ways have you placed too much weight on marriage to satisfy and fulfill you, rather than on the One whom marriage is supposed to point to (Christ)? What steps can you take in your marriage (or in your singleness) to ensure that Christ is supreme in your life?
2. In the sermon, we learned that God designed marriage to be a covenantal relationship, where a man and a woman promise to love one another, no matter what. One of the implications of this is that it means that marriage is not primarily about what you can *get*, but about what you are willing to *give*. In what ways have you made marriage (or your expectation of marriage) all about what you can get? If you are married, what would it look like for you (this week) to live out this implication of marriage being about what you have promised to give? If you are single, what does this implication mean for the way you approach dating / pursuing marriage?
3. In the sermon, it was mentioned that marriage often feels like "death" because God uses marriage to put our sin and selfishness to death. If you are married, share about some of the ways you have experienced this, and/or are experiencing this right now. What did God teach you (or what is God teaching you) through this experience? If you are single, what are some practical steps you can take to identify and repent of sin and selfishness right now, that can help prepare you for marriage in the future?
4. In the sermon, it was mentioned that God's original design for marriage is between one man and one woman. In a culture that is increasingly against this definition of marriage, what can we as Christians do to engage the culture in love, without compromising the truth? Are there ways in which you are tempted to compromise this truth for the sake of being tolerant? Why or why not?