

God's Vision for Marriage



We are so in love Marriage is going to be great!!! We have so much in common . . . He adores me . . . We like the same music . . . I can't wait until we have our own house . . She makes me feel so good. . .

Sound familiar? We enter into marriage thinking that we will live happily ever after. If marriage is so wonderful, why do so many marriages end in divorce? Then there are the people who are skeptical about marriage being wonderful, so they decide to give it a test drive first by living together.

It is not long after the wedding when reality sets in — *Maybe this isn't going to be as easy as I thought. . . I'm not sure we are compatible . . . Why is he so grouchy in the morning? ? ? ? Why isn't she cleaning up the house? ? ? ?*
When these questions arise, what motivates us to stick with it, to not give up?

Separate from the Bible, **research proves the importance of marriage in a culture.** Glenn Stanton in his book *Why Marriage Matters* states his thesis: **“First-time, lifelong, monogamous marriage is the relationship that best provides for the most favorable exercise of human sexuality, the overall well-being of adults, and the proper socialization of children.”** His thesis is a legitimate way to discuss the importance of marriage with unbelievers.

God challenges us to think on a much grander scale. God has a majestic vision of what our life together can be. We imagine a great job as we do the hard work of an education. We visualize a great career as we do the hard work of our job. We envision a great financial future as we do the hard work of saving and planning. **Do we picture a grand image of ourselves as people of great character, virtue, wisdom, and holiness?** Can we capture God's heart for us to see the most magnificent picture of all? Would we be willing to do the hard work to get there? What if the hard work to achieve that character is loving, serving, and sacrificing for our spouse?

We know that from the beginning God made a man **and** a woman. He said that it was not good for man to be alone. His desire was for man and woman to enter into a **lifelong commitment to join their lives together — just as two individual personalities living life as one.** We can say that is **God's original design for marriage.** But why do we need another human? Are we not complete in Christ? Doesn't Paul say in I Corinthians that it would be better for men or women to remain single so they could devote all of their lives to ministry? God does say we are complete in Christ but God created in each one of us a need for relationships to other humans. But God did not intend for our joy in the relationship to come from what **get** from that person. He intended **our joy to come from what we could give** to him or her.

Whether the relationship is one of ministering to another as a single person or ministering to our spouse as a married person, **the grander picture is to see how God wants to develop us to be like Him through sacrificing and serving another, with our goal being to give them joy and pleasure.**

The Bible says the marital relationship is a picture of Christ and the church. Christ sacrificed and served the church through His life and death, He calls us to sacrifice and serve Him through the lives of others. **It there a greater calling in all of life than to the call of becoming like Him?** God's vision is to use marriage to bring you to that point.

“ Paul does not build a dam against the river of hedonism; he builds a channel for it. He says, ‘Husbands and wives, recognize that in marriage you have become one flesh. If you live for your private pleasure at the expense of your spouse, you are living against yourself and destroying your joy. But if you devote yourself with all your heart to the holy joy of your spouse, you will also be living for your joy and making a marriage after the image of Christ and His church. **This is what God intended for marriage: Put the glory of Christ on display by pursuing your joy in the holy joy of your beloved.**” (John Piper, *The Dangerous Duty of Delight*)