

Christian Marriage



A Picture of Something More

by Don Schmidt

Marriage is an incredible union—it is the joining together of two lives in a covenant relationship, the creation of a union that transcends personal differences and the context within which we realize what it means to become one in Christ with another person.

When couples stand before a wedding alter and exchange their marriage vows, they are publicly committing themselves to one another. In making this mutual commitment, they are entering into a union that is unique among all other human relationships.

Traditionally this institution of marriage has been referred to as “holy matrimony.” Not only was it God who performed the first wedding in the Garden of Eden, but it was God who ordained marriage as a legal institution through the Law of Moses.

A Powerful Word Picture

When marriage is understood in this way, it is clear why the Scriptures speak frequently to God's design for this relationship. In one of his letters, the Apostle Paul

compares a husband's relationship with his wife to a believer's relationship with Jesus:

“Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior...

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy . . . to present her to himself as a radiant church . . . In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies . . .

“This is a profound mystery, but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband” (Ephesians 5:21-33).

As the Apostle Paul looks for a word picture he can use to teach the early church about marriage, he finds the best analogy for marriage in the relationship which Jesus Christ has with the Christian church.

What a Challenge!

From this passage we understand that marriage is not only an incredible human relationship; it also reflects the Divine relationship available in Jesus Christ. In the Divine relationship, Christians experience unconditional love, sacrificial commitment, and mutual respect. And when these qualities are reflected in a marriage, the human relationship offers us a taste of what it means to be loved by God Himself.

For a couple on their wedding day, there is no higher picture to describe the relationship which they are preparing to enter. And there is no higher standard by which they will be able to measure the quality of their relationship with each other than this relationship which Christ desires to have with His church.

The Bride of Christ

While marriage is an incredible human relationship, even the best of marriages can only approximate the wonder of a

personal relationship with God. Jesus Christ's death and resurrection paid the penalty for man's sin, making it possible for believers to experience a truly incredible union with Him as their Savior and Lord. But, we can also look at this "bride of Christ" analogy which Paul has used to understand more of what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ.

Couples know that they aren't united in marriage simply because they know each other, or because they care for each other, or even because they desire to be united to the other. Rather, the marriage union is formed when a man and a woman commit their lives each to the other and receive this same commitment which their partner is making to them.

In the same way that marriage is entered into through this exchange of commitments, so a Christian is one who has entered into a covenant relationship with Jesus Christ by committing his life to Christ and receiving the commitment which Christ has made to each of us. For

Jesus, this commitment led to the cross where He gave His life for our sins. Persons who don't understand this may know about Christ and they may serve Him through their church, yet they will miss out on eternal life if they have never entered into a personal union with Jesus Christ (Matthew 7:21-23).

A Personal Invitation

God's design for the marriage union is truly incredible. But even more incredible is the realization that Jesus Christ has made available a personal relationship with the very God who created us. Should you desire to experience this incredible union with Jesus Christ, you may receive God's forgiveness by placing your faith in His death on the cross.

Jesus said, *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life"* (John 3:16).

And the Apostle Paul said, *"That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God*

raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9).

If you would like to know more about how you can experience this personal relationship with Jesus Christ, you may call the church to speak with a pastor or request the free materials which are available to assist in your decision.

"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in . . ."

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