

# A Bible Study on Marriage: Foundations for a Godly Union

## The Divine Design

Marriage is not merely a human institution but a divine covenant established by God at the dawn of creation. It is a sacred mystery, a living portrait, designed to reflect profound spiritual truths about Christ and His Church. As you prepare to enter this holy estate, it is essential to build your union upon the timeless bedrock of Scripture. This study will anchor you in the core biblical principles of marriage to equip you for a lifetime of covenant-keeping love.

### I. The Foundation: God's Original Blueprint (Genesis 1-2)

The very first marriage sermon was preached by God Himself. Before sin entered the world, God declared the pattern for this union. Genesis 1:27-28: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it.”

**Equality in Essence, Distinction in Function:** Both man and woman bear the full image and glory of God equally. Their union in difference reflects God’s nature. The blessing and mandate are given to them together as a team. Genesis 2:18: “And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.”

**The Purpose of Companionship:** God declared the first “not good” in creation—man’s solitude. The wife is fashioned as an “help meet”—a helper suitable for him, implying partnership, complementarity, and strength. This negates any notion of inferiority; a “helper” in Scripture is often God Himself (Psalm 33:20). Genesis 2:24: “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.”

**The Covenant Formula:** This verse is the cornerstone, quoted by both Christ and Paul. It outlines three non-negotiable actions:

1. **Leave:** A decisive, physical, emotional, and financial departure from primary allegiance to one's parents. A new primary human loyalty is established.
2. **Cleave:** From the Hebrew dabaq, meaning to cling, hold fast, or be glued together. This speaks of an unbreakable covenant commitment, a loyal, steadfast, and passionate devotion.
3. **Becoming One Flesh:** The profound mystery of total union—physical, emotional, spiritual, and social. It is a unity that does not erase individual identity but creates a new, shared entity.

**II. The Portrait:** Marriage as a Reflection of Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5). The New Testament reveals the deepest purpose of marriage: to be a living parable of the gospel. Ephesians 5:22-33: This passage is the master key to understanding God's design for marital roles.

**The Wife's Calling (v. 22-24, 33):** "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord... as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing." And, "the wife see that she reverence her husband." This submission is not about value or ability, but about order and reflection. It is a voluntary, intelligent, and loving choice to honor her husband's God-given responsibility to lead, protect, and provide. The model is the Church's joyful submission to Christ. The word "reverence" means to respect, honor, and hold in high regard.

**The Husband's Calling (v. 25-33):** "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it... So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself."

The husband's duty is staggeringly high: to love with a sacrificial, purifying, and caring love. It is not a love of dominance, but of service and self-giving. He is to love her as his own flesh, nourishing and cherishing her. His leadership is fundamentally the leadership of a servant—washing feet, laying down his life, seeking her holiness and flourishing. His headship is defined by the cross.

**The Great Mystery (v. 32):** “This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.” Your marriage is meant to be a daily, visible sermon to the world about the faithful, loving, and joyful union between Jesus and His people. Every act of sacrifice, every gesture of respect, every moment of forgiveness preaches the gospel.

### **III. The Atmosphere: Love, Respect, and Intimacy**

The covenant structure is filled with the atmosphere of mutual love and godly character. 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a: “Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth.” This is the operational manual for daily married love. Substitute “Charity” with your name. This love is patient in frustration, kind in action, humble in success, and gracious in conflict. It is the \*agape\* love that chooses commitment over feeling. 1 Peter 3:1-7: Reinforces the pattern of a wife’s chaste conduct and a husband’s honoring consideration, emphasizing prayer as a vital shared practice. \*“Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.”\* (v. 7). The phrase “heirs together” reinforces your spiritual equality. Note the severe warning: marital discord hinders communion with God.

Hebrews 13:4: “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.” God sanctifies the physical union in marriage. It is to be honored, enjoyed, and protected from all defilement. It is a gift for pleasure, intimacy, and procreation within the safe boundaries of covenant faithfulness.

### **IV. The Glue: Covenant-Keeping in a Fallen World:** We live in a broken world, and even Christian marriages face trials. Scripture provides the tools for endurance.

Proverbs, Ecclesiastes & The Words of Christ: Communication: “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.” (Ephesians 4:29). “A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.” (Proverbs 15:1).

**Forgiveness:** “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.” (Ephesians 4:32). The standard for forgiveness is infinite—how much God has forgiven you in Christ.

**Unity & Division:** “A house divided against itself cannot stand.” (Mark 3:25, applied). Protect your union from external interference and internal strife. “Two are better than one... for if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.” (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10).

**Malachi 2:14-16:** “Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant... For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away.” God is the ultimate witness to your vows. He takes covenant-breaking (“dealt treacherously”) with extreme seriousness. This underscores the sacred, triune nature of marriage: a man, a woman, and God.

### **Conclusion:** Building Your House Upon the Rock

As you stand at the threshold of marriage, remember this: Your feelings will fluctuate, circumstances will change, and trials will come. But a marriage built on the obedience to these scriptures, empowered by the grace of the Gospel, and sustained by the Spirit of God, will not collapse. Your union is more than a contract; it is a covenant before the Divine Witness. It is more than a partnership; it is a sacred mystery displaying Christ’s love. It is more than a personal commitment; it is a beacon of God’s faithful character to a watching world.

Therefore, leave decisively, cleave unconditionally, and pursue oneness diligently. Let the husband daily ask: “How can I love her as Christ loved the Church today?” Let the wife daily ask: “How can I respect and support him as the Church submits to Christ?” And together, build a home where prayer is unhindered, love never fails, and the gospel is beautifully, tangibly on display. “Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it.” (Psalm 127:1a). Commit your marriage, from this day forward, to the Master Builder. Let Him establish your union, for His glory and your everlasting good.