**God’s Blueprint for Marriage**

 Christian marriage can be one of the greatest blessings of a person’s life. Many followers of Jesus Christ view their spouse as a best friend, a lifelong love, a faithful companion, and a co-worker for the Lord.

 For others, however, marriage is a source of frustration and disappointment. Some married couples look at the future with fear, despair, and hopelessness. Many married couples find themselves somewhere in the middle. Their marriage is good in many ways, but they want to keep growing.

 The good news is that God’s Word has all the instructions we need to have a marriage that will honour Him. Peter said that God has given us, “**Everything pertaining to life and godliness**” (2 Peter 1:3). God wants His children to learn how to build marriages that are permanent, productive, and give praise to Him. As we begin this study together, be encouraged that Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour stands ready to help us build better marriages.

**I. Marriage is God’s Idea!** (Genesis 2:18-24)

Genesis 2:18: “Then the LORD God said, *‘It is not good for the man to be alone; I WILL MAKE him a helper suitable for him.’”*

1. According to Genesis 2:18, where did the idea of marriage originate?

 *- God! … therefore, not subject to man’s revision; cannot change terms*

 - *Only a woman can complete a man (and only a man can complete a woman).*

 *- the world has perverted God’s design.*

*- Every marriage involves 3 persons: a Man, a Woman, and God. All people are accountable to God for how they treat marriage.*

 *- Those who tamper with marriage will be judged by God. Heb. 13:*

*- Some people are uniquely (and supernaturally) called to the single life. I Co. 7:1, 7-8, but this is hardly the norm (though many today are intent on preparing for the exception) (the gift of singleness is given for the purpose of being fully devoted to God w/o distraction –1 Cor.7:32-35)*

 **B.** God designed the **Blueprints** of Marriage.

1. A Special Commitment

 Genesis 2:24 *“For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.”*

1. man with 1 woman = “Very Good!” (vs. 31)
2. A Permanent Commitment

 Matthew 19:4-6 “*What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate*.”

**II. The Purposes of Marriage**

To build your marriage upon a Biblical basis, you must be committed to fulfill God’s purposes for marriage.

 **A.** Common reasons people get married

1. To escape
2. To gain social status – peer motivated
3. To have “Legalized” and “Guilt-free” sexual gratification – selfish motivation
4. To gain a housekeeper or fix-it person – how can you serve me, attitude
5. To gain a sense of self-worth
6. Economic reasons
7. To have children
8. Partner is attractive and makes them feel good
9. Many people desire marriage to become happier, to feel more fulfilled, or to fill a void in their lives.

 **B**. Biblical Purposes for Marriage

1. **Purpose 1: Children** (procreation Gen. 1:28; Psalm 127:3)
2. **Purpose 2: Companionship** (Genesis 2:18; Prov. 2:17; 1 Peter 3:7)
3. **Purpose 3: Assistance** (Genesis 2:15, 18)
4. **Purpose 4:** **Characterization** of God’s relationship to His people and Christ’s relationship to His church (Eph. 5:22-32)
5. **Purpose 5: Physical union** (Gen. 1:27-28a; 2:24c; 1 Cor. 7:3-5; Heb. 13:4)
6. **Purpose 6: Comprehensive Partnership** (Genesis 2:24c)

 a) What this doesn’t mean:

 – Loss of identity or individuality

 – No differences (Rom. 12 – the Church is one, yet many parts)

 *uniqueness complements/ we would be foolish not to appreciate*

 b) What this does mean:

 Unity – united in purpose and commitment

 Partnership – Complete in every area of life

 Sacrifice – Commitment to sharing all of life together

**III.** **Marriage Partners Share Life Together**!

 A. **Intellectually**

1. Thoughts and ideas
2. All that each one learns
3. Insights, reasons in decision making
4. Opinions on various matters
5. Study, discussion of the issues of life
6. **Desires/ Emotions** (Romans 12:15; 1 Cor. 12:25)

1. Joys and sorrows

2. Grief and pain through the trials of life

1. **Social Relationships**

1. Developing close friendships with the same people

2. Common recreational activities

1. Developing interest in each other’s personal hobbies
2. Extending hospitality to other people
3. **Work**

1. Communicate about work related activities

2. Home projects

1. Difficulties related to work; relationships
2. Rejoice with one another’s accomplishments
3. Prayer about work
4. **Physical Life** (Song of Songs; Prov. 5; 1 Cor. 7)
5. Concern for one another’s well being
6. Seeking to understand and adapt to one another’s physical strengths and weaknesses
7. Demonstrating affection in mutually satisfying, God honouring ways
8. Dealing Biblically with problems motivated by love for God and each other
9. **Ambitions**
10. Unity in goals (Matt. 6:33; 2 Cor. 5:9; Phil. 2:2, Col. 1:10)
11. Unity in desires regarding the marriage relationship
12. Family
13. Spiritual growth and service
14. Children; parenting
15. Finances
16. Occupational and educational
17. Overall future
18. **Difficulties and Trials**
19. Proverbs 17:17 – can count on each other in adversity
20. Eccles. 4:9-12 – Lifting one another up
21. 1 Thess. 5:11 – Build up each other
22. **Spiritual Life** (1 Peter 3:7)
23. Praying together
24. Reading and studying God’s word
25. Discussing spiritual problems and truths
26. Common convictions and views
27. Local church involvement
28. Serving Christ in common ministries
29. Sharing all that God is teaching you
30. Exhortation and encouragement
31. Testimony for Christ
32. Raising up godly children
33. Counseling one another about personal sins
34. Confessing sins to one another
35. Seeking and granting forgiveness

**IV.** **The Preeminence of Jesus Christ!**

1. Jesus Christ must have first place in your life and marriage. This is the key to fulfilling all God’s purposes for marriage!

 “*He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything*!” Colossians 1:18b

1. We must **filter** every decision through the grid of God’s Word (Josh. 1:8)
2. We must **strive** to please the Lord more than all others (including self)
3. We must **rely** on God’s strength, and not our own (Phil. 4:13)
4. We must **delight** in His ways (Psalm 1)
5. We must **seek** God’s glory above all else (Phil. 1:20)