

The Master's Plan for Marriage

A Biblical Guide for Successful Marriage



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Introduction

Marriage is a divine institution of God. It was the first covenanted institution He formed. This union was initiated with purpose, mission, authority, and dominion. The Bible tells us, *“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth’”* (Genesis 1:26-28 NKJV). Adam was given purpose, direction and boundaries before he had a wife. God alone was Adam’s source. *“Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it”* (Genesis 2:15 NKJV). *“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh”* (Genesis 2:24 NKJV).

Marriage is not an eternal covenant between a husband and wife. Jesus said that, in the new eternal kingdom, people will not marry nor be given in marriage. He said, *“Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God? For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in*

marriage, but are like angels in heaven" (Mark 12:24,25 NKJV). This may be disheartening for some, but God alone is the true source of fulfillment and peace.

If you believe that marriage is God's plan for your life, that's awesome. But are you prepared for all that it will demand from you? If you believe you need to get married to experience fulfillment, to be complete or to experience true happiness, then you are advised not to do it. Marriage is not the source of happiness and fulfillment. It is a divine institution where that gracious and glorious bond is shared.

God alone brings completion and wholeness to everyone's life. A personal, intimate, ongoing life lived in absolute surrender and obedience to the Lordship of Jesus Christ is where growth and fulfillment is found. It is unwise and futile to attempt to extract from others what they are incapable of providing. One's mate is an ever-present relationship in which they can share and enjoy the grace of God with, but he nor she must never be seen as the source of that joy.

**Jesus said, "*I am the way,
the truth, and the life...*"
(St. John 14:6).**

Jesus alone is the Zoe life that the human heart longs for. He alone meets the deeper needs of man's

soul. He alone brings wholeness, rest and serenity to the human heart.

So, how does one construct the Master's plan for marriage? It is written in Matthew 7:24,25 (NKJV), *"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock."* As if constructing a new home, where and how it is built is critically important. A well-constructed home must have a firm foundation, well placed plumbing, connected electrical wires and circuits, intact mechanical fixings, and plumb framing. Each of these sections in home construction will have profound impact on the livability of the house. So, it is with marriage. Each part, section and arena of the marital relationship must be built and constructed according to the Master builder, for He alone holds the blueprint to the Master's plan for marriage.

Chapter One

Why Marriage?

Marriage is the highest form of a blood covenant which transcends culture. It is the scriptural way that a man and a woman can rightly become one flesh. Covenant means the cutting or parting of flesh. Whenever there is cutting of the flesh, some blood is poured out. The blood covenant is witnessed for the first time in Genesis 2:21,22, *“And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.”* This marital covenant is the creative order of God alone. It was not an idea or concept fashioned by the first man and women, Adam and Eve. It was the will and design of the Almighty who said, *“Therefor shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh”* (Genesis 2:24). God made the woman (wife) for Adam and brought her to him, and the two were of the same flesh.

God Almighty ordains marriage. His plan and purpose for this new family unit demanded oneness and agreement. The marriage of Adam and Eve was God’s idea. Nowhere is it written that Adam was

lonely, unhappy and cried out to God for a mate and assistance. God is the One who said it is not good that Adam would be alone. God's plan and purpose for Adam and this new creation would require a suitable mate and partner. That is still an essential part of His glorious plan for the earth.


This marital covenant is far more than a mutual business contract. It was never to be entered into without sincere contemplation and earnest prayer. In Matthew 19:4-6 (NKJV), Jesus said, *"Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."* Notice the words, "what God has joined together, let not man separate." The Creator is an essential part in the joining together of the marital covenant.

There are many in this current generation who choose to live together and bypass marriage. That decision is a willful choice to live without the blessing from the Creator. Living together outside of a marital covenant distorts the intent and plan of God and is missing many of His key elements which are needed for any successful relationship. A married couple elevates God's instructions above personal desires, acknowledges God's authority over their lives and surrenders fully to it.


Marriage is not like buying a pair of shoes that are tried on to see if they fit. In marriage, there are no exchanges or returns. If it feels a little stiff in the beginning, give it time and the fit will soften.

When I (Carol) was newly married, it was a real adjustment. For the first several months I would cry wanting to live near my mother and sisters. We were stationed at Camp Lejeune Marine Base in Jacksonville, North Carolina, nearly six hours from Charlotte. I never lived that far away from my immediate family. Married and living with a strange man who knew nothing about the emotional needs of his wife was a very uncomfortable fit. Yet, I continued wearing what I was graced with and we both matured, softened and adjusted. Forty-two years later, marriage fits quite comfortably.

Marriage is a powerful way God's children are able to bring Him glory. It affirms that there is a greater purpose and reason other than selfish fleshly pursuits that humans may have.



**Everything God created,
He created for His own glory
and for His own good pleasure.**



For it is written, *“You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created”* (Revelation 4:11 NKJV). God made man in His image to reveal Himself through them. When the husband and wife function and flow together, they reveal God's creative glory. Glory is the revealed splendor of a thing. A

Christ-filled marriage reveals the awe and beauty of its Creator and Author. Righteousness (right living before God) in marriage and in the home is an awesome way to reveal God's glory and goodness. Zacharias and Elizabeth were both righteous before God, which brought glory to Him. *"And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless"* (St. Luke 1:6 NKJV).

Marriage is how Almighty God is able to produce a righteous seed from generation to generation. It is known that Father God was moving through human history to bring His Son, Jesus, into the earth. Jesus was the promise seed who would inherit the world. The husband and wife are to share with each other and their children the life and fulfillment they receive from their personal relationship in Christ. This life in Christ is to advance from generation to generation. God has commanded that His Words be taught to your children. *"...speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land of which the Lord swore to your fathers to give them, like the days of the heavens above the earth"* (Deuteronomy 11:19-21 NKJV). In accordance with Genesis 1:28, I (Carol) believe God will and does protect His plan for humanity to be fruitful, multiply and replenish the earth with a righteous seed. I believe one of the reasons God judged the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah was to protect the seed of Abraham and Isaac. Days before the two angels destroyed the sexual perversion in these cities, God assured

Abraham and Sarah that one year later they would have a son. He protected the plan and seed that Isaac was carrying inside his loins. This protection was not merely physical or ethnical, but it was spiritual and moral. Sodom and Gomorrah were morally and spiritually corrupt. They lacked a faith in the true and living God, so much so that they lusted in their hearts and minds for sexual uncleanness.

Abraham was a man who led his family after his faith and trust in God. The Bible tells us that God knew, “...*that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him*” (Genesis 18:19). It's very important to note that Abraham's household was an essential part of God's eternal plan, therefore, Abraham had to require them to obey the Lord as he did. This righteous pursuit of producing seed is to fit into the safety of marriage between one man and one woman.

Marriage establishes a healthy environment for procreation, recreation and reproduction of what God originally created. It is used by God to reproduce His likeness. The wicked could grow and overrun the righteous if there was no righteous seed to reproduce. God-centered marriages and families who live in righteousness each day protect God's creation. This does not mean the single parent is not blessed of the Lord. Nor does this mean the children are by any means living under a curse. They are not cursed but blessed from the womb. Yet, it is known that the very best setting to bring children up is in an intact home

with a father and mother who both love God and each other. Many families and cultures are living the pains and ills caused by single parenthood. The vast majority of those single parents are doing an amazing job, yet families and children obviously do far better when they have both of their parents loving and investing in them.

My (Leon) parents divorced when I was six years old. My older brother and I were living with our grandmother at the time. Shortly after I turned six, our grandmother passed away and we went to live with an aunt who did all she could with her own son and now two of her brother's children. Life was very challenging for my brother and I during those years without our parents in our daily lives. It was and is only by the grace of God that we endured those years. The struggles we faced were far deeper than the constant lack of physical provisions, but the inner turmoil nearly crushed our souls. For nearly eight years as a child, I lived apart from both of my parents and I can honestly say, they were not the best years of my life. God's plan for the family must be far better. That's why my dear wife and I made it such a priority that our children would witness God's plan for marriage and the home each day. Thanks to His goodness, we have been blessed to offer that kind of home to our children and grandchildren. It is God's will that a husband and wife bring their children up in a home where they can be loved, trained, equipped, and empowered for His eternal purpose. I know that our Heavenly Father wanted me, Carol and our offspring to all be a family of righteousness to fill the earth.

In and through the covenant of marriage, mankind must exercise earthly dominion. The family is the central institution ordained by God to demonstrate and exercise authority and dominion in the earth. Everything that God created in the earth was originally placed under Adam and Eve who were a family in agreement and living in absolute authority over all that had been entrusted to them. The enemy knew and recognized this, came and assaulted them to separate them from God and from each other. Eve gave attention to a third voice, a voice that was not God. God alone is to be the third voice in the marital relationship; any other voices are subject to lie and deceit.

There is an awesome power in a family that lives and operates in their God ordained marital agreement. According to Ecclesiastes 4:9 (NKJV), *“Two are better than one, Because they have a good reward for their labor.”* Jesus said, *“Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them”* (Matthew 18:19,20 NKJV).

There is so much power, authority and strength in a home and family that lives and operates in unity and agreement. For it is written, *“...Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand”* (Matthew 12:25 NKJV).

**When a home, family and marriage
are in full agreement to do God's will
and to fulfill His purposes, there is
multiplied power working for them.**

God's Word says, *"And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword"* (Leviticus 26:8 KJV).

Through the wonder of marriage and the strength of the family unit, God's glorious creation is wisely managed. According to Genesis 1:28, God commanded the male and female to subdue the earth. To subdue means to bring into subjection, tread down and to keep under. This awesome task was entrusted to the first family of creation and then delegated to all those in Christ Jesus who follow. As children of the Most High, everywhere we have been given authority and dominion, we must also manage for the glory of God. We have to take full responsibility for what has been entrusted into our hands. We cannot permit the enemy to rule over our marriage, home, nor our children. Our rights and responsibilities should not be relinquished to any others. Our time, money, home, and children are to be managed in such a way that God gets the glory.

Through the biblical covenant of marriage, God's selfless love, genuine compassion and eternal glory is witnessed. The union of one man and one woman is a

visible expression of the oneness His people are to have with the Godhead. I (Leon) do not believe Christians or the church is the Bride of Christ but the Body of Christ and are appointed and called into a oneness with Christ. Because Christians are the Body of Christ, Jesus cares for His body even as one cares for His own flesh. Husbands are to care for their wives as Christ Jesus cares for His church. *“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it;”* (Ephesians 5:25).

Marriage gives the husband and wife an arena to share God's goodness like few other things do. *“And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him”* (Genesis 2:18). Notice the word “good.” *“He who finds a wife finds a good thing, And obtains favor from the Lord”* (Proverbs 18:22 NKJV). Eve was a good thing to Adam. A wife is graced to be a good part of her husband's life and she comes with favor from the Lord. Wow! It's important to reiterate that there is nothing to indicate that Adam was lonely (abandoned) but alone (unaided). Adam was not waiting on a wife to have fulfillment. His fulfillment was found in God alone, and Eve was to join him in celebrating and delighting in that fullness of life and purpose.

Through the wonderful covenant of marriage, couples are able to communicate and demonstrate God's infinite goodness by how they love and care for their mates. Married couples experience His goodness each day, then they are charged to serve that grace to their mates, and together, they serve His goodness and grace to their children. Then as a family, they

communicate that same grace and goodness to all those around them. Of course, one can successfully do all these same things outside of marriage and the family unit, but the family is the bedrock of a civil society and the foundation of the family is covenant marriage.

Why marriage? In a practical sense, the history and data are clear: people will live longer, stay saner, get richer, and be happier in marriage!¹

Wisdom to Remember

- Marital covenant acknowledges and recognizes God is over their lives and surrenders fully to it.
- Marriage has a greater purpose and reason other than selfish fleshly pursuits. Everything God created, He created for His own purpose and for His own good pleasure.
- Our Heavenly Father wanted and still wants the family of righteousness to fill the earth. He wills that a husband and wife will bring their children up in a home where they can be trained, equipped and cared for.
- Marriage was first set in place by a covenant of cutting of flesh. Whenever there is cutting of flesh, some blood is poured out. This is the first time the blood covenant is witnessed. The blood covenant is the highest form of covenant agreement.

¹ Maggie Gallagher, "Why Marriage Is Good For You," *City Journal*, (2000), accessed 17 May 2024, at <https://www.city-journal.org/article/why-marriage-is-good-for-you>.


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- Covenant establishes an unbreakable bond. Marriage is not a mere contact, but a blood covenant that God Himself witnesses.


Chapter Two

Character Qualities of a Great Relationship

It is written in Galatians 5:22,23 (NKJV), “*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...*” There is no one in all the earth who understands relationships better than the Holy Spirit. He is the one who formed mankind and fashioned everyone in the womb of their mothers. The fruit of the Spirit are His qualities growing in the inner man. It’s important to know that when life puts pressure upon people, what is deep within their heart and soul will come out. Marriage, like no other relationship, will expose the heart. Therefore, growing and maturing in the heart is vital to a successful and fulfilling marital relationship.



**Fruit of the Spirit are the
highest character qualities
of all human relationships.**



One cannot share with their mate what they have not gotten from the Lord. These character qualities are not acquired from their spouse but shared with them. God alone is the source of these characteristics. Carol and I (Leon) have been providing marital counseling for many years, but in the last several years, we have come to understand more than ever the most urgent and important things needed for successful marriage was the fruit of the Spirit. Marriages works when His characteristic are maturing and growing in both spouses. Marriages faulter and fail when one or both fail to grow in some or many of these nine essential qualities.

Why fruit and not some other comparable quality or illustration? Fruit can grow and be observed by others. It can also feed and nourish others. The fruit that is seen and eaten is the byproduct of its nourishment from the root system. The deeper the root, the richer the fruit! A person's relationship and connection with the Lord determine the fruitfulness of their life. Jesus said, *"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing"* (St. John 15:4,5 NKJV). It is profoundly important to recognize and pause at Jesus' words, "Without Me you can do nothing." Marriage cannot and will not work effectively without God's divine aide. Remember, marriage is God's plan and not man's.

Some may say, "I know plenty of good marriages and they do not affirm faith in Christ or God." That