

Why Your Marriage Needs the Gospel

4 Facts

...you should know

1. Marriage was created by God; & He patterned it after the _____.

Genesis 2:24. “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall become one flesh.”

Eph. 5:32. “This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church

2. The first sins in human history occurred in the context of _____.

Genesis 2. “(16) And the LORD God commanded **the man**, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: (17) But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”

Genesis 3. “(1) ...And [the serpent] said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? (2) And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: (3) But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. (4) And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: (5) For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. (6) And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband **with her**; and he did eat.”

A. Eve followed the serpent’s leadership rather than her husband (thus joining the serpent in rebellion against Adam and God).

B. Adam was passive when he should have protected and led his wife.

- C. Eve assertively led Adam contrary to the leadership he (and God) had provided her.
- D. Adam “obeyed” his wife and followed her leadership in direct disobedience to God
- E. Adam elevated Eve to a position above God, and he chose her over God.

“[Adam chose] joy in marriage apart from submission to God’s authority.” (*Richard Phillips, The Masculine Mandate*).

3. The institution of marriage got _____ as a result of the Fall.

- A. The husband and wife immediately began _____ themselves from one another

Genesis 3:7. “And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.”

- B. The husband and wife hid themselves from _____, seeking to escape detection.

Genesis 3. “(8) And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. (9) And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? (10) And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. (11) And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?”

- C. The husband and wife hid themselves from their _____, afraid to see themselves truly. (*cf. Isaiah 6:1-5*)

- D. The husband and wife became _____.

- 1. Adam. Genesis 3:12. “And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.”

“[Adam’s] reactions are so smooth and deftly developed that one would never guess he is a rookie at the business of sin.” (Becky Pippert, Hope Has Its Reasons, 88).

“The idea that comes most naturally to man, as if from his very nature, is the idea of his innocence. . . . We are all exceptional cases. We all want to appeal against something. Each of us insists on being innocent at all costs, even if he has to accuse the whole human race and heaven itself.” (Albert Camus)

2. Eve. Genesis 3:13. “And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.”

“After I was saved, and before I was married, I lived under the mad, undaunted delusion that I was spiritually mature. Mine was a rich and largely imaginary kind of holiness. If ignorance is bliss, then I was in permanent ecstasy. The infrequent examinations of my seemingly innocent heart revealed little need for improvement. I lived expecting that at any moment God might send chariots to carry me to heaven, Elijah-like. Talk about a guy in need of the doctrine of sin.

Then it happened. I got married . . . and became a blame-shifter. . . . [After getting married] I can’t tell you how many times I thought, ‘I never had these problems before. This must be my wife’s fault.’ The truth is, I’d always been a blame-shifter—it’s just that after getting married there were so many more good opportunities to express this fault.” (Dave Harvey, When Sinners Say ‘I Do’, 69).

- E. The husband and wife became cursed with curses that were _____ to their marriage:

A. To the Wife:

Genesis 3. “(16) Unto the woman he said, I will multiply, really multiply, thy pain with regard to thy **conception & pregnancy**; in pain thou shalt **bring forth children**; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.” (*literal translation*)

- *The wife will experience pains associated with conception, pregnancy, and childbirth*
- *The wife will have within her a violent desire to master her husband*
- *The husband will have to govern his wife contrary to her violent desire [for dominion]*

B. To the Husband:

Genesis 3. "(17). . . cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; (18) Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; (19) In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

- *The husband will have to work hard (diminishing time and energy he can invest in his wife) and be wearied*
- *The husband & wife will age and die, and their marriage will die with them*
- *The husband and wife will have the ongoing presence of sin to deal with in each of them*

C. 1 Corinthians 7:28. ". . . if you marry, you have not sinned, and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Yet such will have **trouble** in this life, and I am trying to spare you."

D. Richard Baxter. "Considerations Preliminary to Marriage" (from A Christian Directory)

"(2) In marriage, there is such a meeting of faults and imperfections on both sides that makes it much harder to bear the infirmities of others rightly. If only one party were forward and impatient, the steadfastness of the other might make it the more tolerable; but we are all sick, in some measure, of the same disease. And when weakness meets with weakness, and pride with pride, and passion with passion, it exasperates the disease and doubles the suffering. And our corruption is such, that though our intent be to help one another in our duties, yet we are more apt to stir up one another's distempers."

"(12) [For the woman] Women especially must expect so much suffering within marriage that if God had not put into them a natural inclination to it, and given them so strong a love to their children that makes them patient under the most annoying troubles, the world would be at an end through their refusal of so calamitous a life. Their sickness in childbearing, their pain in childbirth with the danger of their lives, the tedious trouble night and day that they have with the children in nursing them; besides their subjection to their husbands, and continual care of family affairs; being forced to consume their lives in a multitude of low and troublesome businesses: all this and much more would have utterly deterred women from marriage if nature itself had not inclined them to do it."

"(20) Consider that if love makes you dear to one another in life, your parting at death will be the more grievous. When you first come together, you know that such a parting you must have. Through all of the course of your lives you may foresee it: one of you must

see the body of your beloved turned into a cold and ghastly clod; you must follow it weeping to the grave, and leave it there in dust and darkness.”

E. Why??? Why would God level such curses upon husbands and wives?

“Remember how Adam accepted the apple from his wife, choosing the gift over the Giver as he ate the fruit from her hand? Through His curses, God rejected the very arrangement Adam was trying to establish: joy in marriage apart from submission to God’s authority. His curses said, in effect, ‘You cannot enjoy marriage without returning your heart to me!’ God’s curses on the relationship were the poison for which God alone was the antidote. This is why marriage is practically hopeless apart from the grace of Christ, and why divorce is so rampant. The struggles that men and women experience in marriage are intended by God to drive us to our knees and to our Bibles, that we would restore God to the center of our lives.” (Richard Phillips, The Masculine Mandate, 73-74)

4. God graciously intends for marriages to be rescued, molded, and shaped by the _____.

A. God “preaches the gospel” in Genesis 3:15 (“proto-evangelium,” or “first gospel”):

Genesis 3:15. “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”

1 Timothy 2. ‘(14) And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. (15) Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.”

B. God provided for Adam and Eve coats of skin from a slain animal.

Genesis 3:21. “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and [He] clothed them.”

C. God calls on both the husband and wife to let their relationship be shaped by the gospel.

Ephesians 5:32. “This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”

Ephesians 5. “(23) For the husband is the head of the wife, **even as** Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. (24) Therefore **as** the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. (25) Husbands, love your wives, **even as** Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; . . . (28) **So** ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. (29) For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, **even as** the Lord the church: . . . (33) Nevertheless let every one of you in particular **so** love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.”

THE GOSPEL & YOUR MARRIAGE

The greatest thing that can make or break a marriage is the mental image of love that both husband and wife bring into the marriage. Unfortunately, in the case of many, their vision of love has been shaped by the likes of Hollywood movies and Harlequin novels, romanticized daydreams and raunchy magazines. Smarmy love songs, laden with sexual overtones, solidify this shallow view of love, luring souls onto the broad path to marital disappointment and ruin.

Of too few can it can be said that their image of love is shaped by the greatest love story of all time, the story of Christ and His church. Yet for those whose view of love has been trained by it, a glorious fruit of righteousness is produced in their lives!

Consider the story. A perfect Prince leaves His castle in pursuit of a criminal maiden, who sits condemned in a filthy dungeon. The Prince dies for the maiden's crimes, but then is raised to life with full authority to do with her as He pleases. He comes to her in her cell and carries her to a faraway place where He can love her as fully as He desires. He washes away her filth, adorns her with beautiful raiment, and bedecks her with jewels fit for a queen. Then He woos and cherishes her every day, while she learns to submit and respond to His enormous passion for her. Eventually, His love so transforms her that the mouths of all hang open at her astounding beauty. She becomes radiant and ravishing, and is presented to her Prince in a wedding ceremony attended by myriads of men and angels. From thence the Prince and His bride live most happily ever after.

This story surpasses anything produced by the pen of Shakespeare -- in its cosmic scope, in its character development, and in its power to transform those who fall under its spell.

Hence, if a man and woman wish to build a successful marriage, let them become students of this amazing Story. Let them daydream and read and sing about it. In time they will find their marriage becoming a re-enactment of it. And nothing so displays the glory of this story like a husband and wife who are bent on cherishing and mimicking its every aspect.