

We come this morning to our third and final study on the primary purposes of marriage. If you recall I have suggested there are at three primary purposes of marriage—imitation (marriage mirrors the relationship between Christ and the church), companionship (marriage answers man's need for a companion to assist him), and procreation (that is, within marriage we find a lawful context for sexual intimacy and child-bearing).

Thus, having consider the first two we come to the third and Procreation. And I want to consider our topic with three main headings: Some Clarifications about Procreation, Some Basic Principles about Procreation, and Some Closing Applications about Marriage.

- I. Some Clarifications About Procreation
- II. Some Basic Principles About Procreation
- III. Some Closing Applications About Marriage

#### I. Some Clarifications About Procreation

1. Here I want begin with four clarifications about marriage and procreation (that is, about physical intimacy and child-bearing).
2. (1) Not all marriages result in children—this is an obvious fact—for various reasons not all couples will have children.
3. Perhaps it's a medical issue or otherwise, but various reasons, often known only to God Himself, some families will only have two people in them.
4. Now this of course would never have happened, had man never fell—every person would have married and had children.
5. And thus, we must be mindful brethren, there are unique circumstances, wherein married couples will not have children.
6. (2) Children are an ordinary blessing of marriage—by this I mean, it's ordinarily true that marriage produces children.
7. Gen.1:28—"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."
8. This is the very first command in Holy Scripture—"Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth (with offspring or children)."
9. Now obviously brethren, this command was not merely for Adam and Eve, but was for the whole of their offspring.
10. It was never God's intention that Adam and Eve themselves fill the earth—they were to have children, who had children, who had children.
11. Now, let me remind you of what theologians refer to as "creational ordinances"—or things instituted by God at creation.
12. Historically, we identify 4 creational ordinances—a weekly Sabbath, vocational labor, marriage, and procreation.
13. These are things instituted by God in paradise at creation—these will continue until the new heavens and earth.
14. Gen.9:1—"So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth" v7—"And as for you, be fruitful and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth and multiply in it."
15. This is God's first command to man (Noah) post-flood—there's a sense in which post-flood earth was a new earth.
16. And with a new earth, there's a renewed command to Noah (and his sons), to replenish the earth with offspring.
17. Again, it wasn't God's intention that Noah and his wife should fill the earth, but Noah's children and grandchildren.
18. And so, it's important to notice, that these commands have never been removed—God still expects man to fill the earth.

19. 1Tim.5:14—"Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully."
20. Joel Beeke—"Sexual intimacy ordinarily goes hand in hand with bearing children. Having created man, male and female, in his own image, God says, 'Be fruitful and multiply'. If we truly see human beings as the image-bearers of God, we will want to see His image-bearers multiplied on earth."
21. (3) Procreation is not the only purpose for physical intimacy—while procreation is a primary purpose for sexual intimacy, it's not the only reason.
22. This of course was an error that many professing Christians have fallen into over the years—especially in the medieval area.
23. The largely apostate church (what became the Roman Catholic church), forbid physical intimacy on holy days.
24. And that didn't merely mean the weekly Lord's Day, but because the church had added holy days, this meant physical relations were forbidden for most days of the week.
25. Furthermore, even when physical intimacy was lawful, personal pleasure was viewed as worldly and/or carnal.
26. But I trust you brethren understand, that this thinking is in total contrast to a Biblical and reformed view of marriage.
27. Now in addition to procreation, I want to take a few minutes and suggest three further purposes for physical intimacy.
28. (a) As a remedy against immorality—that is, as a means to satisfy our natural appetite for sexual gratification.
29. 1Cor.7:2-3—"Because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband."
30. In other words, marriage provides a lawful context for physical intimacy to satisfy our natural sexual appetites.
31. Now, that physical intimacy within marriage is a means of keeping us from immorality is not only the testimony of Scripture but also our reformed brethren.
32. LBC (25:2)—"Marriage was ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife (companionship), for the increase of mankind (procreation), and for preventing of uncleanness."
33. Martin Luther—"Today, after our nature has become corrupted by sin, woman is needed not only to secure increase (procreation) but also for companionship and for protection (from sexual immorality).
34. George Swinnock—"Marriage is the lawful conjunction of one man and one woman for the term of their natural lives for the procreation of children, the benefit of a good companion, and since the fall, the avoiding of sin."
35. (b) As a means of pleasure and delight—it's for this reason God created men and women to find delight in physical intimacy.
36. God could have made man and woman to procreate in ways that lacked pleasure, but that is not what He's done.
37. (c) As a means to promote marital closeness—that is, physical intimacy practically unites the couple together.
38. William Gouge (1622)—"This 'due benevolence' (as the apostle calls it in 1Cor.7:3) is one of the most proper and essential acts of marriage. It is necessary for the main and principal ends of it: (1) as for preservation of chastity in those who have not the gift of sexual self-control for celibacy, (2) for increasing the world with legitimate offspring, and (3) for linking the affections of the married couple more firmly together."
39. What a wonderful truth! It's through physical intimacy that a husband and wife become one flesh with each other.
40. Prov.5:15-20—"Drink water from your own cistern, and running water from your own well. Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice with the wife of your youth. As a loving deer and a graceful doe, let her breasts satisfy you at all times; and always be enraptured with her love."
41. Now, most of you will know, that this passage is provided as a remedy against the enticements of the immoral woman.

42. One primary way in which we quench our thirst for another man or woman is by drinking from our own well.
43. But there's two phrases within this passage that speaks to this third point (the fact that physical intimacy promotes marital closeness).
44. V18—"Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice with the wife of your youth"—what a wonderful way to describe physical intimacy—"rejoice with the wife of your youth."
45. The other phrase is in v19—"and always be enraptured with her love"—that is, to be captivated with her love.
46. Thus, while physical intimacy is intended for procreation, it's not merely intended for procreation but for these other purposes.
47. (4) Marriage provides the only lawful context for physical intimacy—I trust this is obvious—sexual relations outside of marriage are unlawful.
48. Heb.13:4—"Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge."
49. Here Paul affirms the fact that the marriage bed (physical intimacy) is undefiled—that is, it's pure and unstained.
50. But "fornicators" and "adulterers" God will judge—by "fornicators" is meant those who practice intimacy outside of marriage and by "adulterers" is meant those who have physical intimacy with others not their spouse.
51. This simply means—while physical intimacy is pure and holy in marriage, it's wicked and evil outside of marriage.
52. Let me illustrate—now that winter is upon us, our family has started to occasionally make fires in our fireplace.
53. Fire, as long as it's contained within the fireplace is a good thing—but, fire outside that fireplace is very harmful.
54. So too, sexual relations within marriage is a wonderful thing (something that God actually smiles upon and is pleased with).
55. And yet, sexual relations outside of marriage (that is, two people married to one another), is a wicked thing God hates.
56. O brethren! What a tragedy! Fallen and foolish man has taken something so good, and turned it into something very bad!
57. But what I fear is this—that some (many) within conservative circles can overact to this perversion of physical intimacy.
58. Dear brethren, physical intimacy is not something the world invented, nor is it something invented by the devil.
59. God invented physical intimacy and He invented it for man's good and pleasure! It's a holy and precious gift from God.
60. As Christians, let us refuse to be influenced by the world, and, let us refuse to overact so as to despise God's gifts.

## II. Some Basic Principles About Procreation

1. Here I want to say three things about the relationship between children and parents, between marriage and the product of that marriage.
2. Thus, I am not here intending to address the broader issue of parenting, but how childrearing relates to the husband and wife relationship.
3. (1) Parents must work together in parenting—that is, husbands and wives must present a unified front in parenting.
4. Without doubt, one of the primary reasons a marriage weakens, is because parents are on different pages in parenting.
5. Joel Beeke—"In marriage, the husband exercises headship in relation to his wife, but in parenting they must exercise joint leadership. It is critical that both spouses understand this and agree on how it should be done. One of the chief points of contention in troubled marriages is that one parent is more lenient (or more severe)

- than the other. Children soon learn to play one parent against the other. If one parent then operates independently, the other may soon feel marginalized, and disharmony will permeate the home."
6. It's for this reason its been our practice, that when a child asks us a question, we ask them—Have you spoken to your father or mother?
  7. Husbands and wives must regularly speak about the children, to ensure they are both basically on the same page.
  8. (2) Parents must put their marriage before parenting—by this I mean, children must know mom and dad come first.
  9. This is another reason a marriage suffers—typically speaking the mother places the children before her husband.
  10. Now, don't get me wrong, it's possible that husbands elevate children above their wives, but this is something more common for women.
  11. Tit.2:3-4—"The older women should admonish the young women to love their husbands, (and) to love their children."
  12. Why does Paul tell older women to teach older women to love their husband (first), and then love their children (secondly)?
  13. I suggest because there's always the temptation for woman, to place the needs of their children above their husbands.
  14. Ladies I trust you understand that your first ministry is to your husband and then secondly, it's to your children.
  15. Now, obviously there are times when, on a practical level, a child will need your attention in a unique manner.
  16. For example, a very young child, a newborn, is obviously in need of your attention from early to late in the day.
  17. But even then, wives must be careful not to neglect their husbands, because, she married him and not her children.
  18. Jay Adams—"God put a husband and his wife in the garden, not a parent and child. Contemporary parents all too often live for their children. They are urged to give their best time and energies and money and thoughts to their children."
  19. And here the thing—our children will benefit as they are taught from an early age, life doesn't evolve around them.
  20. What a wonderful thing for children to observe—that mommy and daddy have a unique relationship distinct from the children.
  21. It's not that mommy loves daddy more, but, as my wife likes to say—Mommy loves you daddy in a unique way.
  22. (3) Parents must anticipate a time that exceeds parenting—that is, parenting has a definite goal or focus in mind.
  23. The goal or end of parenting is to prepare your children to marry—to prepare them to establish their own family.
  24. Ordinarily, children are not intended to stay with us but to leave us—to leave their father and mother and be joined to another.
  25. Marriage begins with two people and ordinarily it ends with two people—it begins with a husband and wife and ends with a husband and wife.
  26. My wife used to teach this to our children by pointing out, that as we drove in our van, Angie and I were up front (and the children in the back).
  27. When we first got married there was only her and I—for a season there's us and the children—and eventually only her and I.
  28. I fear what sometimes happens is—parents fail to think in these terms and act as if marriage is all about parenting.
  29. But dear brethren, marriage is not all about parenting—it's about two people who for a time, parent children together.

30. Jay Adams—"Parents who have built their lives around their children frequently end up as strangers who have little or nothing between them except the children. They have failed to build a marriage throughout all of these years. Their marriage was held together by the children."

### III. Some Closing Applications About Marriage

1. In closing, I want to suggest three broad applications in light of all that we've seen in these three sermons on marriage.
2. (1) Let me speak to those unmarried—now, in light of all that I have said about marriage, I hope marriage has become increasingly desirable to you.
3. Now, I know there are some of you who desire to be wed, and you are praying and waiting on God's provision.
4. And it's not my intention to breed within your discontentment as you wait—remember, single people are no less Christian and no less important to the church.
5. But I want to say a few brief words, to those of you who are presently single and desire, in God's timing, to be married.
6. (a) Pray—this is of course where you must begin, continue, and end—God and God alone, gives husbands and wives.
7. (b) Prepare—by this I mean, don't merely do nothing as you wait, but seek to become a mature Christian man or woman.
8. (c) Pursue—by this I mean, you must look for a spouse, Prov.18:22—"He who finds a wife finds a good *thing*, and obtains favor from the LORD."
9. Now, obviously, this will often look differently for men than for woman—but, either way, we must be active!
10. But you might ask, how might a young woman be active in pursuing a spouse? Well, she can speak to her father, brother, or pastor.
11. She can put herself in places where she can meet new people (and especially young men), who may turn into more than friends.
12. But at the end of the day, dear sister and brother, the Lord has to provide, and He knows what's best for you at present.
13. The Lord isn't against you but He's very much for you, and He knows your desires and needs better than you do.
14. Dear young people, it's far better to remain single than to marry hastily, and thus regret it for the next 50 years.
15. Outside of what God you'll serve and what church you'll join, what person you marry is the 3<sup>rd</sup> most important decision you'll make.
16. Let me encourage you to get wise counsel about these things—speak often to your parents, siblings, and pastors.
17. And finally, remember, you are complete in Christ! You are not half a Christian! You are married to a heavenly Groom!
18. (2) Let me speak to those married—here I want to encourage married couples to respond to these sermons in two ways.
19. (a) Be thankful to God for marriage—I've said this before, but I believe marriage is a gracious gift from God.
20. And even if, like all of us, you've had some struggles in your marriage, let us together thank God for marriage.
21. Let us thank Him for the opportunity to reflect the relationship that exists between Christ and His beloved church.
22. Let us thank Him for our covenant companion—a friend that sticks closer than a brother—a best friend to live life together.
23. Let us thank Him for the privilege of physical intimacy and procreation—for sending children into this world as sharpened arrows.

24. (b) Be committed to God in marriage—by this I mean, let us remember that marriage is a God-given institution.
25. Let us resolve to improve our marriages and better reflect that relationship that exists between Christ and His church.
26. Let us resolve to improve our friendship and closeness with our spouse, as we walk together through this world.
27. Let us resolve to better enjoy each other, knowing that our bodies are not ours, but belong to our respective spouses.
28. Let us resolve to parent our children as a unified force, remembering to give priority in the first place to our marriage.
29. Like anything else, brethren, a healthy marriage takes work (just as a healthy body takes work and a healthy soul takes work).
30. I would really encourage every married couple present this morning, to find time in the next few days to talk.
31. And ask each other these questions—Do you think our marriage properly reflects the love and commitment that Christ and His church have for one another?
32. Do we view each other as our best friend and closest companion? Do we have a healthy and vibrant intimate relationship?
33. Ordinarily, there isn't a healthy marriage where there isn't communication—we have to be honest with ourselves.
34. And let me say this—regardless how long you've let your marriage go, it's never too late to begin to amend it.
35. You have two options before you—you can continue to ignore the problem, or you can begin to address the problem.
36. (3) Let me speak to those unsaved—here I want to encourage you to look to Christ as the perfect heavenly Groom.
37. You know, I was asked by one of you recently, a question that I've never actually thought of (but as I thought about it the Lord gave me the answer).
38. The question is this—If there was marriage in the first paradise, why won't there be marriage in the second paradise (heaven)?
39. Because it's true brethren—our Savior Himself said—there will be no marriage and no procreation in heaven (Matt.22:30).
40. But here was my response—the reason there will be no marriage in heaven is because there will be marriage in heaven.
41. In other words, the only marriage that will continue in heaven is the marriage between Christ and His beloved Bride.
42. This is why there will no marriages—because we will all be married to Christ—He is the only Groom in heaven!
43. And thus, the original marriage between Adam and Eve in the first paradise, pointed to the eternal marriage between Christ and the church in the final paradise.
44. Here's my point—as wonderful as marriage is it's a temporal blessing—but there's an eternal marriage that never ends.
45. Do you remember the three things I suggest to those who are unmarried (pray, prepare, and pursue)—well I want to close by suggesting them to you also.
46. You must pray—O Lord, I am a sinful, guilty, wretched sinner! You must prepare—and how is a sinner to prepare themselves for Christ? Well, here's how—you must realize that you can do nothing to prepare yourself for Christ.
47. That is, you must repent from your sin and your self-trust—you must turn away from this world and your native merit.
48. You must pursue—that is, you must come to Christ by faith—you must turn from yourself (repentance), and turn to Christ (faith).
49. And here's the good news! Every person who pursues Christ like this will find Him a gracious and loving Savior.