

# Theological Equipping Class

## Marriage

November 2, 2025

### 1. Marriage was instituted by God and is thus governed by God.

- What is the origin of our rights?
  - Natural rights or legal positivism
- Who created and regulates marriage?
- Mimetic vs. poietic
  - Mimetic: imitation | poietic: creation
  - “we all live in a world in which it is increasingly easy to imagine that reality is something we can manipulate according to our own wills and desires, and not something we necessarily need to conform ourselves to or passively accept.” (Carl Trueman, *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self*)
  - The world of “expressive individualism”
- “Marriage is not a human invention; it is a divine revelation. Its design never was our own made-up arrangement of infinite malleability. It was given to us, at the beginning of all things, as a brightly shining fixity of eternal significance. We might not always live up to its true grandeur. None of us does so perfectly. But we have no right to redefine it, and we have every reason to revere it.” (Ray Ortlund)
- “marriage did not just spring up arbitrarily out of social conventions or human taboos. Marriage was not invented by men but by God.” (R.C. Sproul)

### 2. Marriage is normative.

- What does normative mean? establishing or relating to a norm
  - The question of exceptions
- *Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”* (Genesis 2:18)
  - Why is it “not good”?
- “I do not restrict the declaration to his [Adam] person alone, but rather regard it as a common law of man’s vocation, so that everyone ought to receive it as said to himself, that solitude is not good, excepting only him who God exempts as by a special privilege.” (John Calvin)

### 3. **Marriage is intended to be monogamous.**

- Genesis 2:24 *Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.*
- Jesus specifies that divorce & subsequent remarriage is adulterous.
- The first example of polygamy in the biblical text was in reference to Lamech, the godless murderer in Genesis 4. In addition, every biblical narrative that mentions polygamy is saturated with strife, jealousy, favoritism, and abuse.
- The Bible explicitly condemns the taking of many wives by kings in Deuteronomy 17.
- In Isaiah 4 polygyny is pictured as a judgment upon Israel. *And seven women shall take hold of one man in that day, saying, "We will eat our own bread and wear our own clothes, only let us be called by your name; take away our reproach."* (Isaiah 4:1)
- The New Testament forbids leaders in the church from practicing polygamy by calling them to be the husband of one wife.
- Marriage is a picture of the gospel and should thus portray the relationship between Christ and His Church.
- So, if Scripture implicitly condemns polygamy, why isn't it more explicit?
  - man's "hardness of heart"
  - The Old Testament describes and regulates divorce, it does not endorse it. The same seems to be the case with polygamy.
  - "We may infer that the Old Testament tolerance of polygamy, like its tolerance for divorce, was because of the 'hardness of heart' of the people." (John Frame)
- For more on this, you might want to read our blog, "Is Polygamy Permissible" on the website.

### 4. **Marriage is intended to involve the union of man and woman.**

- *Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." Now out of the ground the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. (Genesis 2:18–25)*

- notice the gendered language: man and woman; man and wife.
- “a helper fit for him”
- similarity and dissimilarity
  - Dangers in either extreme

## 5. Marriage is intended to be a union of enduring permanence.

- Covenantal vs. contractual arrangement
  - A contract tends to be temporary, but the marriage covenant is permanent.
  - Those under contract tend to look for outs.
  - Contracts tend to be impersonal whereas covenants are more relational.
  - Contracts tend to focus your attention on whether the other party is living up to their part, whereas covenants fix your eyes on your own responsibility.
  - Contracts tend to be individualistic whereas covenants are communal.
- Covenant is with spouse AND God.
- *...the Lord was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. (Malachi 2:14)*
- As Jesus said, what God has joined, let no one separate.
- “From the very beginning marriage was and is by virtue monogamous, an essential bond between one man and one woman, and therefore also a lifelong covenant, indissoluble by human authority.” (Herman Bavinck)
- Come back next month as we talk about Divorce and Remarriage.

## 6. Marriage is intended as a reflection of the gospel.

- *For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called. (Isaiah 54:5)*
- *And in that day, declares the LORD, you will call me ‘My Husband,’ and no longer will you call me ‘My Baal.’ (Hosea 2:16)*

- *Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. (Ephesians 5:25–32)*
- Sex tells a story
  - Adultery
  - Pornography
  - Homosexuality
  - Transgenderism
  - Divorce
- The question isn't whether or not your marriage or your sexual life reflects the gospel, the question is whether it faithfully does so. What does your marriage and your sexual life say about God? Does it tell the truth about Him or a lie?
- Parallels between marriage and worship
  - God creates woman by putting the man to sleep just as God creates the church by putting Christ to sleep in the grave.
  - Man and woman were naked and unashamed. So Christ's clothing was torn from him and he was suspended undressed as he endured the cross, scorning its shame.
  - A man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his bride, so the Son left the Father to be joined to the Church.
  - The woman was formed from the man's side, so Christ's side was wounded and from the blood and water that flowed, the church was born. In fact, interestingly the word used in the LXX, the Greek translation of the OT, for side or rib in Genesis 2 is used 5 times in the NT, four of them are used of Christ's pierced side.
  - The man and woman are one flesh, and so the Church is called the body of Christ.
  - The woman doesn't come as a result of the normal order of nature or by man's effort, but must be formed by the sovereign and unique work of God, so the Church doesn't exist by nature or labor, but sovereign grace.
  - The woman gets her name and identity from the man, so the Church gets its mission and identity and name from Christ.

## 7. Marriage is a hierarchical relationship.

- Equality doesn't mean interchangeability.
  
- Masculine orientation
  - Named after dust
  
  - Cursed in the dust
  
  - *And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return." (Genesis 3:17–19)*
  
- Feminine orientation
  - Named after husband and kids
    - *Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." (Genesis 2:23)*
  
    - *The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. (Genesis 3:20)*
  
  - Cursed in those relationships
  
  - *... train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled. (Titus 2:4–5)*
  
  - *To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you." (Genesis 3:16)*
  
- "The woman's punishment struck at the deepest root of her being as wife and mother; the man's strikes at the innermost nerve of his life: his work, his activity, and provision for sustenance."  
(Gerhard von Rad)
  
- Headship and hierarchy

- Evidences of headship
  - Adam was created first.
    - *For Adam was formed first, then Eve...* (1 Timothy 2:13)
  - Eve was created from Adam.
    - *For man was not made from woman, but woman from man.* (1 Corinthians 11:8)
  - Eve was created for Adam and not Adam for Eve.
    - *Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.* (1 Corinthians 11:9)
  - Naming
  - Man is called the head of his wife and that word head connotes authority.
- Grace restores nature!
  - “grace is opposed not to nature, only to sin...grace restores nature and takes it to its highest pinnacle.” (Herman Bavinck)

## **8. Marriage is ordered toward sex and procreation.**

- Marriage, sex, & procreation are all intended to be tethered together. They are a package deal.
- What happens when we divorce sex from marriage?
- What happens when we divorce marriage from kids?
- *Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them...* (Psalm 127:4-5)

## **Conclusion**

- An exhortation to singles
- An exhortation to wives
- An exhortation to husbands