

LORD, MAKE US ONE

God is ONE and desires human marriages to reflect this reality.

KEY POINTS

- ❖ The Bible describes a host of marital relationships – “the good, the bad and the ugly.”
- ❖ On the "bad" side of the ledger, we have Lot and his wife who loved the things of this world more than the things of God.
- ❖ Their lives were such a poor witness that they couldn't convince their own sons-in-law to escape Sodom before judgment fell (see Genesis 19:1-26).
- ❖ Other examples aren't hard to find.
 - Jacob, Rachel and Leah (see Gen. 29:21-30:8): polygamy and jealousy between the wives. (Spouses today still create jealousy in the other spouse through inappropriate relationships.)
 - King Solomon practiced gross polygamy and disobeyed God's laws with 700 (many idol-worshipping) wives who led him into idolatry (see 1 Kings 11:1-8).
 - Ahab and Jezebel joined together in evil to satisfy their personal greed and other sinful desires (see 1 Kings 16:29-31; 21:1-16).
 - Ananias and Sapphira lied to God (Acts 5:1-10), seemingly seeking a status in the church such as Barnabas had received. (See Acts 4: 36-5:1-10.)
- ❖ On the ugly side:
 - David and Bathsheba: adultery, deception and murder were the hallmarks of this relationship even before they were married (see 2 Samuel 11).
 - Hosea and Gomer: In the Old Testament, God represented Himself as Israel's husband (Jeremiah 31:31-32; Hosea 2:16). He instructed Hosea to marry a “wife of harlotry” and have children with her. Their marriage and their children represented Israel's spiritual adultery against God (Hos. 1:2-3; Hos. 2). In spite of this, God continued to call Israel back to a place of reconciliation (Hos. 2:14-20).
- ❖ Let's now look at the good side.
 - Adam and Eve: God created Eve as a special gift to Adam (see Gen. 2:18). Adam immediately realized that a spousal relationship is exclusive (see Gen. 2:21-24). God's plan for total oneness in marriage was firmly demonstrated in the first marriage on Earth. A man leaves his father and mother and cleaves – clings, holds fast – to his wife.
 - Isaac and Rebekah (see Gen. 24): Abraham's servant went back to Abraham's homeland to find a wife for his son, Isaac. Led by God, the servant chose Rebekah. Her family was consulted and she made the brave decision to travel back with the servant to become the wife of a man she had never met. When Isaac met her, he loved her (Gen. 24:67). But was this true love? Or was it just infatuation with a beautiful woman?
 - Either way, they developed a strong commitment to each other *and* a relationship with God that carried them through 20 years of infertility (Gen. 25:20-26).

KEY SCRIPTURES:

Genesis 2:15-18, 21-24; Ephesians 5:17-33

- Boaz and Ruth: Ruth was not a worshiper of Yahweh, but made a decision and told Naomi, “Your people shall be my people and your God, my God” (Ru. 1:16-19). Here, God makes it clear that anyone is welcome into His kingdom, His family and His bride.
- Boaz shows us that a man may need a little nudge (see Ru. 3:1-11). But then Boaz quickly completed the job (3:12-13; 4:1-6).
- Zechariah and Elisabeth were good and righteous, but old and childless. Gabriel, the archangel, prophesied to Zechariah a future that involved the birth of a son (Luke 1:5-17). The “oneness” required for the prophecy's fulfillment produced the promised son!
- You may be old and think there is nothing left for you, but God still has a wonderful plan for your marriage.
- Joseph and Mary: Even before their official wedding ceremony was conducted and vows were exchanged, Joseph did everything in his power to protect his bride from harm and scandal (Matthew 1:18-19) and later joined her in believing that God was the One doing the marvelous, miraculous work in her body. He was in it “for better or for worse.”
- Aquilla and Priscilla worked together as tentmakers (Acts 18:2-3). Possibly, Priscilla took the lead in teaching the word of God “more accurately” to Apollos (see Acts 18:26). In their oneness, they celebrated the gifts and strengths they each had, without jealousy.
- ❖ It is the honour of a man to try to live up to Christ's example, as portrayed in Ephesians 5:17-33, though it may seem impossible. But with the help of the Holy Spirit, give it your very best shot. Wives, you also do the same.
- ❖ And let our prayer continue to be “Lord, make us ONE!”

DISCUSSION/REFLECTION TOOLS

1. Read through Ephesians 5:17-33 together.
 - How does Jesus act as "the Church's husband"?
 - What are the instructions to husbands? Wives?
 - Which instructions might be difficult for either spouse and why?
2. From your understanding of God, is it ever best for a spouse to not follow these and/or other biblical instructions to spouses? Discuss.

Prayer Time

Lord, please make us one through the power of Your Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name, amen.

WEEK OF SUNDAY, JULY 21, 2019

NOTES

Meditate as you read through/listen to this week's message. If it helps, use symbols for your notes.

- ✓ (Reminds me/Confirms) 💡 (New idea) 🧠 (Think about)
- 👉 (Do this) ❤️ (Speaks to my heart) ↺ (Must share)

PRAYER NEEDS/THANKSGIVINGS

Start-up: What is something you can do on your own but find easier/more enjoyable with a partner or a group?

Go deeper with your Life Group family.
 CONNECT-REFLECT-DISSECT THE WORD
 Your Life Group ~ Your Lifeline