

## Blessed Marriages

Written by K B Napier

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Many teachers say God instituted marriage in Genesis 2:18-24. Does the text say this? God saw that Adam needed a companion, so He made one out of Adam's rib and called the new creation 'Woman' (*'ishshah*, meaning female, opposite to a man, a wife). Adam said that because she was made out of his body they were both one flesh. So, the couple will leave their parents to live as one.

Though the word 'marriage' is not used, we cannot doubt that the text refers to it. Also, throughout scripture there are many references to marriage. The very fact that the man is called 'husband' and the woman 'wife' declares it! The fact that some were divorced means couples were once 'as one'. It has a deeper meaning, for a marriage reflects the relationship between God and the elect amongst mankind. And Christ referred to it when He calls the Church His 'bride'. So, marriage exists and always has, and those who marry are blessed.

Marriage is for life (Matthew 19:5), both spouses are equal (Ephesians 5:29-31) and yet the husband is head of the relationship while his wife is head of her domain, the home. Also, marriage is not just about sex, but also about bringing children into the world. Paul praises men and women who remain single and celibate, but this applies to those called to a particular ministry in which marriage ties could be a bind.

### **Marriage is required of ALL people, whether saved or not.**

Those who are unsaved and marry do what is right in the sight of God: *"Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."* (Hebrews 13:4). However, marriage between two believers is far superior because it represents a bond between God and Man. Therefore, it must show the signs of such a bond. And adultery denies such a bond.

### **The Blessing on a Christian Marriage**

In the Old Testament God blessed many people at different times. It meant to be praised by God, which brings peace with it and even prosperity. What is meant by having a marriage blessed?

Christ said that we should not expect praise for doing what we ought to do anyway. So, getting married is only a legal requirement made by God. In the case of unsaved couples a blessing is

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simply that they do what is right so complies with God's demand. But, when Christians marry, much more is expected and when the couple complies they will be praised by God and given many benefits.

In Deuteronomy 11:26 and 27 God promises to either bless or curse the Israelites. The blessing comes when the people obey God's commands. Knowing this, how is a marriage between two believers blessed?

It is blessed or praised by God when both spouses obey God. This means to HEAR God's word (including reading it and willingness to learn), to KEEP His laws in their hearts, and of utmost importance, to PRACTICE it. Many who claim to be saved are very good at the first two but fail miserably in the third part!

### **NOT 'me and him' but 'US'**

In a true marriage, both the man and the woman have waited on God to provide them with a partner for life. Once God reveals who it is, both work towards pleasing the Lord by doing everything that is right. There is no power-play, no vaunting one person over another, and no chauvinism.

The wife will look upon her husband as more important than herself. AND the husband looks upon his wife in the same way. The husband is the spiritual head and the wife submits to that – but the wife is not thereby inferior... she simply has a different role to play.

The saved person is the apple of God's eye (as was David) and is without corruption. If corruption invades a marriage, it starts to ruin it. Corruption can be anything from a thought to a physical error, such as adultery (in mind or body). Many husbands today expect their wives to obey in everything, but this is not how God sees it. BOTH spouses have an equal duty to please God before they please themselves. Thus, both view God as more important than themselves. So, when they see God this way, and each other, their bond is pure, rich and fruitful. And God will abundantly bless their union.

The order, then, is to obey God and also to be as one. When these things occur, the couple and any children will know immense blessings from the Lord. And it does not end there...

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Both spouses must ensure they keep their marriage alive, interesting, and spiritually productive. It is always sad to see couples taking each other for granted... a sure sign of staleness and an inability to see how ruinous it can be. They must work at their marriage, not only because it is the right thing to do, but because God expects it. Never take an argument to sleep with you – get rid of it beforehand, or it will fester in your heart next day. Be fresh with each other, be romantic (all the time!), and above all be unified in your spirits. Look to God first and everything else second. Repent quickly of any wrongdoing, seek forgiveness if you have hurt your spouse, and always see him/her as if for the first time you fell in love.

Marriage, then, must be godly if it wants God's blessings. And He WILL give them when you obey. Thus, blessings come from God, not from Man. It is God you must please, not your parents or anyone else. When these things are done, blessings and God's help will follow.

Finally (though we could say a lot more), the modern way is to think personal happiness is the most important thing to have. This is why so many end up in divorce court. In God's eyes marriage is for life. Full stop. 'Falling out of love' is NOT an option nor is it an excuse to part. If both spouses work at keeping their relationship alive and true, such a failure will not arise and their relationship will thrive, blessed.

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