

GOD'S BLUEPRINT FOR YOUR MARRIAGE

DANIEL H. SMITH



Developed as a study course by Emmaus Correspondence School, founded in 1942.

God's Blueprint for Your Marriage

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Course Components

This course has two parts: this study course and the exam booklet.

How To Study

This study has twelve chapters, and each chapter has its own exam. Begin by asking God to help you understand the material. Read the chapter through at least twice, once to get a general idea of its contents and then again, slowly, looking up any Bible references given.

Begin studying immediately, or if you are in a group, as soon as the group begins. We suggest that you keep a regular schedule by trying to complete at least one chapter per week.

Thinking It Through . . .

Although these questions are not part of the graded exam booklet, they are particularly helpful for spouses and engaged couples. We recommend that you take the time to think through and discuss these questions.

Exams

In the exam booklet there is one exam for each chapter (exam 1 covers chapter 1 of the course). Do not answer the questions by what you think or have always believed. The questions are designed to find out if you understand the material given in the course.

After you have completed each chapter, review the related exam and see how well you know the answers. If you find that you are having difficulty answering the questions, review the material until you think you can answer the questions. It is important that you read the Bible passages referenced as some questions may be based on the Bible text.

How Your Exams Are Graded

Your instructor will mark any incorrectly answered questions. You will be referred back to the place in the course where the correct answer is to be found. After finishing this course with a passing average, you will be awarded a certificate.

If you enrolled in a class, submit your exam papers to the leader or secretary of the class who will send them for the entire group to the Correspondence School.

See the back of the exam booklet for more information on returning the exams for grading.



OLD TESTAMENT FOUNDATIONS FOR MARRIAGE

SCRIPTURE READINGS:

- Genesis 1:27-28; 2:18-25; 27:7-23; 34:7
- 2 Samuel 6:20-23
- Proverbs 31:10-31
- Malachi 2:10-17
- Matthew 19:3-12
- 1 Corinthians 6:15-20; 11:9
- 1 Thessalonians 4:3

MEMORY VERSE:

- Genesis 2:24

LESSON SUMMARY:

- God established the foundation for marriage in His creative work, and we will find the purpose of God in marriage by understanding the foundation.

When the Pharisees asked the Lord Jesus Christ a question about the permanence and sanctity of marriage (Matt. 19:3-12), He responded by referring to God's basic teachings found in Genesis. He could have cited examples of contemporary ideas on marriage that were expounded by the thinkers of His day. It would also have been natural for Him to repeat the teachings of some great rabbis and thus enter into an interpretive argument (which seems to have been the intent of the question).

Or, He could have baffled those who questioned Him by explaining some of the amazing variations in marriage traditions found in different cultures and time periods. However, His decisive reference to Genesis gives us the perspective and foundation we need to examine the biblical basis for marriage and family.

Marriage in Light of Creation

The first passage our Lord quoted in response to the question about marriage was Genesis 1:27. No doubt some of His listeners were surprised at this response, for many of them would not have seen a necessary relationship between this passage and the subject. However, in light of our Lord's use of this passage, and through the assistance of other Scriptures, it is clear that Genesis 1:27 is key to our understanding the biblical perspective on marriage. Let's note the significant features of this verse that relate to marriage.

First, look at the nature of God's creative work. If man is nothing more than the most advanced animal in a long, evolutionary process, and man's institutions are simply a part of this process, then marriage might be viewed as an imperfect, developing institution. If, however, man is a special being created in the image and likeness of the Creator, then the picture is entirely different. Issues such as morality, accountability to God, and responsibility to God's ordinances become crucial.

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**Marriage was
a part of God's
creative act.**
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The Genesis record, however, makes it clear that marriage was a part of God's creative act. It was not man's idea that one man should be joined to one woman in order to live together for the glory of God. It was God's idea. Thus, as a creation ordinance, marriage in God's pattern becomes the responsibility of all mankind.

Second, it is significant that God created one male and one female. The fact that God did not create one man and three women (or two men or two women, or any other combination), but created one man and one woman, gives us a clear message about His purpose in marriage. The distinction of the sexes is basic to biblical marriage. Any force or ideology that seeks to destroy the distinction of the sexes is also seeking to destroy biblical marriage.

Third, in light of the prevailing confusion today about the distinction of the sexes, we should note that the creation of maleness and femaleness is God’s direct purpose. Genesis 1:27 gives us the basis to say that if you are female, it is because God intends you to be so, and if you are male, it is because God intends you to be so.

Confusion and resentment about one’s sexuality does not originate in God’s Word. Scripture’s clear and consistent teaching is that God Himself ordained and created the distinction of the sexes. He has clearly indicated that men and women are of equal value and worth. He has also ordained distinct role functions for men and women in marriage and family life.

Before continuing our study, please note Genesis 1:28. In a world filled with marital unhappiness and tragedy, it is good to refer back to this significant verse often.

Remember that God’s first expressed attitude toward His creation and joining together of man and woman was one of blessing: “And God blessed them.” Throughout the rest of Scripture, there is no indication that God has changed His initial attitude of blessing on marriage.

This blessing, however, requires that we fulfill God’s purposes and follow His patterns. In this, as in other areas, God’s attitudes are fixed. He has provided a path of blessing, but we can choose to walk outside of that path and thus miss His blessing. One purpose of this study is to encourage our understanding and commitment to obeying the Scriptures in marriage and family relationships, and thus reap God’s blessing.

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**Obey the Scriptures
in marriage and
family relationships,
and thus reap
God’s blessing.**
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God Provides a Companion for Adam

The second passage of Scripture that Jesus quoted in His response to the Pharisees’ question concerning the sanctity and permanence of marriage is Genesis 2:18-25. It isn’t possible to exhaust the significant features of this passage in our brief study, but we will note several important matters. I encourage serious students to probe more deeply into this passage.

God’s initiative is evident throughout these verses. Notice, for example, the strong verbs used to describe God’s actions: caused, took, made (literally, built), brought. We clearly see God’s awareness that the man was lonely.

There is no evidence that Adam had that awareness—at least there is no record that he complained. Yet God saw man's need and met that need according to His own plan and wisdom.

Notice that Adam's need for companionship could not be met in the animal world. Adam had dominion over all the animals (vv. 19-20), even giving names to each one. But by virtue of his unique creation, man is immeasurably above the mere animals. Adam not only had the capability of communion with God, but the intellect and vocabulary to name all the animals. He was a unique, creative work—he certainly was not an “emerging, ape-like being” as some would have us believe.

It is also significant to note that Adam at this point had unbroken fellowship with God. Yet he still had a social need that was not even fulfilled in his relationship with the Creator. The fact that God created man with a need for a social companion has many significant implications.

When God moved to meet man's need for companionship, He did not make another being from the dust of the ground. Adam and the animals had been formed out of the ground, but at this point the Creator did something absolutely unique: He took living tissue from Adam's side and built a companion—a woman.

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**Eve's creation
was the unique
capstone of God's
creative work.**
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Eve's creation was the unique capstone of God's creative work. Had God turned again to the dust of the ground to form her, Eve may have been as different from Adam as any

species of animal is different from another. But Scripture's commentary that God has made of one blood all nations (Acts 17:26) is implicitly true. Whether male or female, all humans share the same creative origin. We are equally created in God's image and likeness.

Genesis 2:23 indicates that Adam immediately recognized the uniqueness of the new being God had created. At last Adam had a fitting helper—a counterpart to him with his own nature! The play on words in the statement, “She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man,” indicates Adam's insight into what God had accomplished.

God Ordains Marriage

The statement in Genesis 2:24 is of greater significance than most of us realize. Perhaps no other statement in Scripture is quoted or alluded to more frequently in Scripture than this. (You may want to search the Scriptures for allusions to, references to, and quotations of this statement.) The statement is so significant that it deserves careful attention. Several explanations of its significance will be given here.

Let's first consider the Hebrew words translated as "leave" and "be joined" ("cleave" KJV). Since the Scriptures teach a continuing responsibility to honor, respect, and in later life care for one's parents, leaving does not indicate a total break of relationship. Rather, it indicates the responsibility of the married person to establish a new and separate unit of society.

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**To be joined
 describes the
 permanence and
 sanctity of marriage.**
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Leaving, therefore, is one of the basic teachings of Scripture that leads to the biblical concept of the nuclear family. That is, when a man and woman are joined together before God, they form a new and distinct unit

of society and are responsible to God to fulfill His purposes in their life together. (This teaching is basic to the later teaching that undue financial and emotional dependence on parents can be destructive to a marriage relationship.)

To be joined simply means to hold onto and not let go. It describes the permanence and sanctity of marriage. A true biblical commitment in marriage means making a commitment to one marriage partner for life.

In considering the last clause of this verse, "and they shall become one flesh," let's look again at our Lord's reference to it in Matthew 19:6. Jesus pointed out that the entire passage relates to two people. However, marriage creates a relationship of oneness that is much deeper than simply being together. Any two people can be together, but only a man and a woman brought together in the intimacy of biblical marriage can become truly one. This will be discussed at greater length in Chapter 5.

The word for *one* in this passage means a compound oneness—one made up of more than one—not absolute oneness. (The same word for compound oneness is used of God in Deuteronomy 6:4!) If absolute oneness were in view here, one marriage partner would lose his or her individuality

in the relationship. However, *compound* oneness indicates that we do not lose our individuality or personal identity in marriage.

We know from a key New Testament passage (1 Cor. 6:15-20) that the intimacy of the sexual relationship in marriage is inherent in the expression “one flesh.” Sexual functioning in marriage did not begin with the fall; it was part of the Creator’s original intent for His creatures. And within the marriage relationship, sexual functioning is honorable (Heb. 13:4).

Two Distinct Perspectives in Marriage

Before leaving this brief consideration of Genesis 2, we need to note two distinct perspectives on the marriage relationship. In observing the Living God laying the foundation for marriage, creating both a man and a woman and joining them together, we see two different perspectives.

From the man’s perspective, marriage is a matter of meeting a need. God saw Adam’s need, created Eve, and brought her to him in order to meet that need. Although most societies teach a young man to look for a wife in terms of *want*, the Bible emphasizes the man’s *need* for a wife. For a man to say “I want a wife” expresses what may be a very shallow and passing attraction. But for a man to say “I need a wife, and she is God’s provision for my need,” he expresses a far more stable basis for a relationship.

From the woman’s perspective, Eve’s created purpose was to be supportive and to meet Adam’s need. Thus the woman’s primary perspective in biblical marriage is to be supportive and meet her husband’s needs.

The apostle Paul refers to these two, distinct perspectives in 1 Corinthians 11:9, where he says that the woman was made for the man, not the man for the woman. Both perspectives are important in biblical marriage. If either of these unique perspectives is lacking, the marriage ceases in part to be truly biblical.

**Trust is vital in
the marriage
relationship.**

Trust in Marriage

As we examine the Old Testament for basic teachings concerning marriage and family life, we see that trust is vital in the relationship. Scripture provides many pictures of marriage relationships that illustrate the importance of trust. It is not possible to look at each of these pictures

in this brief study, but the reader may profitably take time to consider a number of them. Read Proverbs 31:10-31 (particularly verse 11), 2 Samuel 6:20-23, and Genesis 27:7-23. Note the tragedies that highlight the need for constant openness and healthy communication in order to maintain trust in a marriage relationship.

Views of Marriage

In the western world there are primarily three views of marriage.*

Marriage as a Sacrament

The sacramental view of marriage finds its roots in the writings of Augustine. He spoke of marriage as a “sacramental bond” and taught that God dispenses grace through the church and participation in its sacraments. Thus marriage is viewed as being rooted in the standards of church law.

Actually, there is nothing in Scripture that indicates that the institution of marriage itself mystically dispenses divine grace. Marriage is a vehicle for propagating new physical life, not a mechanism for attaining spiritual life. In Scripture the husband-wife relationship is not subjected to the control of the church.

Marriage as a Contract

Historically, this is the prevailing secular view of marriage in western culture. Marriage is viewed as a bilateral contract that is voluntarily formed, maintained, and dissolved by two individuals. Thus, marriage is rooted in the standards of civil law.

Typically, contracts deal with specific actions and are conditional on the continued performance of contracted obligations by the other partner. The contracted model of marriage may be traced to medieval ecclesiastical courts (17th century) and Enlightenment era thinkers, which root marriage in civil law. Power to officiate is by authority invested by the State.

The contractual model of marriage is not found anywhere in the pages of Scripture. It provides a very weak basis for the permanence and

* Kostenberger, Andreas. *God, Marriage, and Family*. Crossway Books, Wheaton, IL: 2004.

sanctity of marriage. It opens the door to a variety of marital agreements that Scripture clearly prohibits.

Marriage as a Covenant

The covenantal view roots marriage in the standards of divine law. Thus, marriage is a sacred bond between a man and a woman instituted by and publicly entered into before God (whether or not this is acknowledged by the married couple), normally consummated by sexual intercourse. It is an exclusive heterosexual covenant between one man and one

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Marriage is primarily a creation ordinance with covenantal features.
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woman, consummated in sexual union, issuing in a permanent, mutually supportive partnership, and normally crowned by the gift of children.

The covenanted model finds its foundation in the language of Genesis 2:24, and other passages of Scripture that explicitly refer to marriage as a “covenant” (especially Proverbs 2:16-17 and Malachi 2:14). While some contractual features may be seen in certain references to marriage, marriage is primarily a creation ordinance with covenantal features.

The covenanted model finds its foundation in the language of Genesis 2:24, and other passages of Scripture that explicitly refer

There are important implications to this. To commit to marriage on a covenantal basis involves the following:

1. **The permanence of marriage:** Marriage is intended to be permanent, since it was established by God (Matt. 19:6); it is not to be entered into lightly or unadvisedly. It involves a solemn pledge to one’s partner before God.
2. **The sacredness of marriage:** Marriage is not merely a human agreement between two consenting individuals (Gen. 2:24). It is a relationship before and under God (not a sacrament).
3. **The intimacy of marriage:** Marriage is the most intimate of all human relationships, uniting one man and one woman in a “one flesh” bond (Gen. 2:23-25). This involves leaving one’s family of origin and establishing a new family unit distinct from the two original families.

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Marriage is the most intimate of all human relationships.
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4. **The mutuality of marriage:** Marriage is a relationship of free self-giving of one human being to another (Eph. 5:25-30). Partners are to be first and foremost concerned about the well-being of the other person and committed to each other in steadfast love and devotion. This, however, does not mean sameness in role. Wives are to submit to their husbands and be their helper, while husbands bear the ultimate responsibility for the marriage before God.
5. **The exclusiveness of marriage:** No other human relationship must interfere with the marriage commitment between husband and wife (Gen. 2:22-25; 1 Cor. 7:2-5).

T H I N K I N G I T T H R O U G H . . .

Practical Questions for Discussion

1. Why do you think Jesus referred to Genesis when the Pharisees asked Him about the permanence of marriage in Matthew 19:3-12?

Is it unusual for people today to refer to Genesis? Why or why not?

2. In today's society, why is it important to remember that God ordained and created sexual distinctions? Explain your answer.

3. Why, as we are told in Genesis 2:24, is a man to leave his mother and father after he gets married?

4. Why is trust vital in a marriage relationship? List ways you can increase it.

If you are married, consider the ways in which you could trust your spouse more.

5. Why do you think the Bible condemns sexual relationships outside of marriage?

What are the results on others of sexual sin? What are the results on one's own body and mind?

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EXAM BOOKLET AK '09 (2 UNITS) GBYM

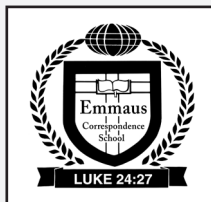
STUDENT NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

ADDRESS

CITY, STATE, ZIP

COURSE GRADE: _____

INSTRUCTOR



Exam developed by Emmas Correspondence School, founded in 1942.

A NOTE ON THE EXAMS

The exams are designed to check your knowledge of the course material and the Scriptures. After you have studied a chapter, review the exam questions for that lesson. If you have difficulty in answering the questions, re-read the material. If questions contain a Scripture reference, you may use your Bible to help you answer them. If your instructor has provided a single page Answer Sheet, record your answer on that sheet. This exam contains the following types of questions:

MULTIPLE CHOICE

You will be asked to write in the letter of the correct answer at the space on the right. Here is an example:

The color of grass is

- A. blue C. yellow
B. green D. orange

 B

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

Questions headed this way are designed to help you express your ideas and feelings. You may freely state your own opinions in answer to such questions.

RETURNING THE EXAM

See the back of this exam booklet for instructions on returning your exam for grading.

DO NOT PHOTOCOPY THESE EXAM PAGES

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CHAPTER 1 EXAM

OLD TESTAMENT FOUNDATIONS FOR MARRIAGE

EXAM GRADE

Before starting this exam, write your name and address on the front of this Exam Booklet.

Directions: Read each question carefully and write the letter of the correct answer in the blank space on the right. Use the separate answer sheet if provided.

1. In Matthew 19:6, Jesus quoted Genesis and said,
 - A. divorce is permitted if both parties agree
 - B. when two people are married, they are joined together by God
 - C. a husband and wife should be considered separate individuals
 - D. God never expected men and women to want to divorce _____

2. According to Genesis 1:27,
 - A. man is a product of evolution
 - B. God ordained and created sexual distinctions
 - C. confusion about one's sexuality is understandable
 - D. man cannot know his origin _____

3. What principle is found in the first four words of Genesis 1:28?
 - A. All married couples should have many children.
 - B. We have the right to rule over all living things.
 - C. Just as God blessed Adam and Eve's marriage, He blesses marriage today.
 - D. God does not consider marriage that important. _____

4. According to Genesis 2:18-25, God created Eve
 - A. because Adam was unhappy
 - B. because Adam kept asking for a wife
 - C. from the dust of the ground
 - D. because Adam needed a companion _____

5. Adam called his companion “Woman” because
- A. she looked different from him
 - B. that was God’s suggestion
 - C. she was created from a part of him
 - D. it was what she wanted to be called
- _____
6. According to Genesis 2:24, a married couple are to
- A. live with their parents until they can afford a house
 - B. leave their parents and establish a new family unit
 - C. live with their parents so they can look after them
 - D. never ask anyone for financial help
- _____
7. For a man to “be joined” to his wife
- A. means no further contact with the man’s parents
 - B. relates to the marriage ceremony
 - C. means to hold on to and not let go
 - D. is no longer a relevant concept in marriage
- _____
8. The term “one flesh” found in Genesis 2:24 describes
- A. two single people who do everything together
 - B. sexual intimacy between unmarried partners
 - C. the intimacy God intends for the marriage relationship
 - D. the spiritual unity that exists among all Christians
- _____
9. According to the first part of Hebrews 13:4, marriage is
- A. to be held in honor
 - B. simply a societal convenience
 - C. not necessarily permanent
 - D. a covenant that can be broken in certain situations
- _____
10. Why is trust so important in a marriage relationship?
- A. It is the only factor that holds marriages together.
 - B. It helps create openness and communication between marriage partners.
 - C. It is a test of how much we trust God.
 - D. It’s the way we convey love.
- _____

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

What difference does it make to you to know that you are created by a loving, personal God and are not just a highly evolved animal?
