



“Marriage: It’s God’s Idea”
Matthew 19:3-6

Idea: Marriage is God’s idea.

Intro: The thought of getting married is probably one of the most frightening ideas while simultaneously being one of the most electrifying. How does one determine that the person he or she is thinking about marrying is the right one? Marriage is a revelation that must be discovered. Kids have their own revelations regarding marriage, and some of them might keep you awake at night.

Someone asked Kirsten, age ten, how people decide whom they should marry. “No person really decides before they grow up who they’re going to marry,” Kirsten replied. “God decides it all way before, and you get to find out later who you’re stuck with.”

Alan, also age ten, had a much less theological take on the question, but his answer may not bring you any more comfort than what Kirsten had to say. “You got to find somebody who likes the same stuff,” he declared. “Like, if you like sports, she should like it that you like sports, and she should keep the chips and dip coming.”

I think Alan is on to something here. In all seriousness these kids are onto something. The Bible does tell us that God is sovereignly involved in leading us to our future spouses. And I do believe that the Bible does paint the picture that there needs to be some mutual commonalities for a relationship to work.

In a day when 50% of all marriages end in divorce, perhaps we need to look at what the Lord says about marriage. After all marriage is His idea. As we think about building the family, we need to understand the teachings of Scripture on marriage and apply them because the marriage relationship between mom and dad tremendously impacts the life of the children in the home.

It has been said that children are the sum of what parents contribute to their lives (Richard L. Strauss). Consequently, as we look at what it takes to build a strong family, we must recognize that the relationship between mom and dad is pivotal to the development of their children. The actions of some children today suggest that their parents embarked upon the sea of matrimony without a paddle.

There are many different thoughts, understandings, and approaches to marriage in our culture today. Some dismiss it altogether. Others prefer to cohabit for a period of time in order to determine if the relationship is sustainable. A small segment of the population encourages marriage at an early age, while a growing segment of the population is delaying marriage until later in life. In addition to these understandings there are some who embrace less traditional approaches like polygamy, open marriages, and homosexual marriage. In such a caldron of ideas, it can be difficult to have a clear and correct understanding of what marriage is and how to keep it healthy. Therefore, we go to the genesis of marriage; we go to the Bible.

Inquiry: In Matthew 19, the Lord Jesus was approached by a group of Pharisees who tested Him with a loaded question

regarding divorce. Jesus responded with an answer focused primarily on marriage.

Read Matthew 19:1-6.

It is interesting that when Jesus was asked about divorce, He immediately pointed back to the origin of marriage. It is important to note that Jesus urged His opponents to go back to the original blueprint for marriage found in the book of Genesis. Notice the three key Scriptures Jesus referenced:

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. – Gen 1:27

*24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.
– Gen 2:24*

1 This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. 2 Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created. – Gen 5:1-2

By alluding to these foundational passages, Jesus was in essence saying, “You don’t need to worry about what kind of divorce is permissible or under what circumstances God sanctions your desire to get out of a marriage. It’s not even going to be a question if you are working on your marriage, as God commanded, and you are trying to make your marriage into all that God wants it to be.” Jesus’ opponents focused on the question of divorce; Jesus focused on the answer of marriage. Rather than providing them with an out, Jesus gave them a reason to stay in.

What did Jesus teach about marriage?

1. Marriage is a God-appointed union. (vs. 4-5a)

There is a lot of discussion in society today regarding the validity and origin of marriage. Jesus tells us plainly that marriage was God's idea. He instituted it. Therefore, it is not an institution created by society or through human ingenuity, as some would claim. This is why as Christians we must stand and fight for the institution of marriage in our nation. The Word of God places the Lord of the universe squarely at the center of all discussion on marriage. The Bible makes it clear that the great and holy God of glory is the originator of marriage. He designed it, and He appoints marriage.

This tells me that it was not a coincidence that Kara and I married one another. It was a divine appointment as God brought us together, orchestrated the events, and made us into one flesh.

This is an amazing thing! How could a Southern-bell from Georgia meet and fall in love with a hillbilly from Northwest Arkansas? How could God ever bring us together?

In human terms, it's called *coincidence*, *experience*, and *running the race*. One day when we were running the race separately, we looked around and saw one another also running the race. We met during a crusade at my church. We started talking. Then we stopped talking for a while. And then one day because of our mutual friends, we started talking again. That then led to us flying back and forth from Georgia and Arkansas. We fell in love and came to believe that the Lord was putting us together. In January of 2003, when we finally walked down that aisle as Mr. and Mrs. James Taylor, we simply culminated the process that God had begun three years earlier. Our marriage is a God-appointed union. If you're married, yours is too.

So, we must not forget what Jesus said: "*What therefore God has joined together, let not man*

separate.” A pastor officiated over our ceremony. The state recognized our union. The guests who attended our wedding endorsed the marriage. But none of them were the central player. It was God who joined us together, not the pastor, not the state, and not our guests. It was God.

2. Marriage is a physical union. (vs. 5)

There is an incredible refrain that accompanies each day of Creation in Genesis 1-2. The Bible says, “And God saw that it was good.” Each of the first five days of the creative process ends with that declaration. However, on day six we find that there was something not good about God’s creation. In Genesis 2:18, we learn that man was alone. There was no helper suitable for him. The animals could not meet the community he needed and desired. He needed a companion with whom he could find fulfillment. God’s answer to this problem was Eve. She was created from Adam’s rib.

The Bible’s description of the marriage union between a husband and a wife is that they are *one flesh*. They are a physical union.

Here’s a biblical math lesson for you today: $1 + 1 = 1$. Jesus insisted that, in marriage, one man plus one woman equals one flesh. When the two of them come together in holy matrimony, they immediately form a physical union. From heaven’s perspective it is impossible to know where one begins and other begins.

If you want to build your family and have a good marriage, then you must not think of yourselves as two separate individuals who think fondly of the other half. Rather, you should see yourselves as a unit, as a team, as one flesh united by God and for God’s purposes. As Eric and Leslie Ludy say, a “great marriage is the

forging of two destinies for a common purpose” (*The First 90 Days of Marriage*).

Your marriage is so much more than a contractual agreement. It is a physical union, which explains why divorce hurts so much. Divorces literally tears apart what God has made into one flesh.

Illust: Explain by ripping apart two plastic salt and pepper shakers.

God’s purpose for your marriage in putting you together is that you would become one flesh.

3. Marriage is a permanent union. (vs. 6)

Jesus made it clear that what God has joined together, man has no business separating. Marriage, then, is meant to be permanent. I had a guy tell me several years ago that he was “stuck with his wife.” Well, I’m not sure it is wise or safe to describe your marriage like that, but it is theologically sound. Jesus never endorsed *serial marriage* in which people feel very free to flutter from one partner to another.

Of course in American culture, serial marriage is common practice. In fact there really isn’t much difference between those inside the church and those who are outside. The majority of people have adopted the phony idea that “God wants me to be happy.” So whenever they no longer feel happy, they feel it is their divine right to divorce and find someone who will make them happy.

Jesus rejects that belief. He says, “What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.” God is not concerned about you being happy; He is concerned about you being holy. He is concerned about you

staying true to your word...to the vow you made to your spouse.

Jesus intends for your marriage to be permanent. Marriage is His idea; therefore, we must play by His rules. We must follow His teachings on it. And so, just as there is no such thing as *gay marriage* and no such thing as *group marriage*, so there is no such thing as *trial marriage*. Jesus taught that marriage is a permanent union between one man and one woman for one lifetime.

Conclusion: I realize that some of you have experienced divorce. I also realize that there may be some of you who heading down that road today. Regardless, of where you are or what is going on in your marriage, the Bible has clearly spoken on this subject, so it is incumbent that we as believers align ourselves to its teachings. After all marriage is God's idea.

We have literally just scratched the surface today. I wish we had time to go deeper into some of the issues that trouble marriages and families. I do believe, however, that a successful marriage, one that honors God, begins with the understanding that marriage is a God-appointed union. It also understands that marriage is a physical union as well as a permanent union. If you don't have a basic foundation in place, it really doesn't matter what else you strive to learn and apply to your marriage.

Once you have put in place the solid foundation here are three things to strive toward:

- Serve
Put the needs and desires of your spouse above your own.
- Protect
Flee any and all immoral temptations.

- Model
Exemplify before your children what a Christ-centered marriage is.

If your marriage is struggling today and heading toward divorce, don't wait till it's too late to get help. Seek counseling. Do whatever it takes to bring health back into your relationship.