

# **Bone of My Bone and Flesh of My Flesh**

## **(Marriage by God's Design)**

**By Al Felder**

*“And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” (Genesis 2:23)*

What a magnificent scene! On the sixth day God created man. He created the male first and then he created the female. Upon their introduction to one another the man stated in his own words the significance of the relationship that he and the woman would have together. She was bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. It is our goal to examine this relationship between a man and a woman.

The Bible emphatically teaches that God ordained marriage. *“<sup>6</sup>But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. <sup>7</sup>For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife. <sup>8</sup>And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. <sup>9</sup>What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”* (Mark 10:6-9) Marriage did not originate with man. It is not something that a group of people just thought up one day and decided would be good for society. Nor is it something that can evolve or change as man desires. As Christ pointed out to his listeners, marriage was put in place by God in the beginning.

The Bible makes it clear that marriage has been around since the beginning. As soon as God created male and female He established this important relationship. One fact that is interesting about marriage is that it is universal. If marriage were just some idea created by man, than you would certainly expect to find some sort of starting point. In other words, there would be some society somewhere in history who did not have such a practice. However, in every civilization, no matter what region or time period, the practice of marriage exists. God ordained it in the beginning and it has been with man ever since that time.

Marriage is foundational. Long before there was ever a state or man-made government, there was marriage. Even before the existence of the Church, marriage was established by God. Because of this fact, the study of marriage, the family, and home life is the study of the most basic building block of society.

Consider the following passage of scripture. *“<sup>5</sup>For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: <sup>6</sup>If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.”* (Titus 1:5, 6). Paul gives Titus instructions about the most important

office that exists within the body of Christ, the eldership. As you study the Bible you find that this is a plurality of men, two or more, who have met certain qualifications and can therefore oversee the congregation of the Lord's Church to which they belong. As you can see, the home can either qualify or disqualify a man. Since the home is the most basic and foundational element of man's existence together, it must be right before the Church, in this instance, can be what God wants it to be.

In order for the Church to be what God wants it to be, the home must be right. God has set forth in His word that the leadership of the local congregation would be an eldership. This cannot exist in a congregation where men do not have the proper relationship with their wives or children. The Church will only be as strong or weak as the family.

History confirms the foundational importance of marriage and the home as well. A study of the great societies of men involves knowing and understanding the family life of that time period. As the family went, so went the great societies of the past. Nation after nation has met its demise with the deterioration of the home being a main factor.

The very first marriage ceremony can be read in the Bible:

*"<sup>18</sup>And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet. <sup>19</sup>And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. <sup>20</sup>And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found a help meet for him. <sup>21</sup>And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; <sup>22</sup>And the rib, which the Lord had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. <sup>23</sup>And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. <sup>24</sup>Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."* (Genesis 2:18-24)

One thing that stands out in this passage of scripture is that it is the first time in the Bible that God says that something is not good. He looked at the man that He had created and determined that he needed a helper. It was not good for man to be alone.

Although God had determined to make man a helper, He did not do it immediately. God brought all of the animals He had created unto Adam. Adam looked at the various animals and gave them names. Whatever name he gave to a creature that is what it was called. As Adam examined all of the animals he noticed that each one had a companion, but he did not. After God had brought this need to man's attention, He caused a sleep to come over the man, took a rib from his side and formed the woman.

After God created the woman He brought her unto the man. There in the Garden of Eden the first marriage ceremony took place with God as the officiator. He as the Father gives the first bride to the first groom. One man and one woman becoming one flesh.

Marriage is not only designed by God, it is also for His glory. If marriage is to bring glory unto God then it must have an important meaning. Because of that meaning, our view of marriage should be high. Sadly, there has never been a generation where the general view of marriage has been high enough.

The Jews who lived during the time of Christ did not grasp the magnificence of marriage. We read earlier from the Gospel according to Mark where the Pharisees came to Christ to tempt Him. They asked Him about divorce. Jesus pointed all the way back to creation to show God's original design for marriage. In the Gospel according to Matthew we read of the response of Christ's own disciples to what He had to say. *"His disciples say unto him, if the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry."* (Matt. 19:10) Wow! What a statement! I believe that they were being absolutely sincere in what they said. The problem was that they had become so accustomed to divorce during their day that they did not have the proper view of marriage.

What was it that Christ said to cause such a response from His disciples? Well, the Pharisees asked if it was lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause. Much like today, divorce was sought for just about any reason. Christ pointed out to the Pharisees that in the beginning this was not God's design for marriage. Not to be outdone, the Pharisees quickly asked, "Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement?" Christ responded by saying, "Because of the hardness of your hearts." Although divorce was not God's design for marriage, He did give commands to regulate it because of the hardness of man's heart. Christ, however, gave a command placing further restriction on this practice. *"And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery."* (Matt. 19:9) Christ specified that marital infidelity was the only allowance for divorce. It was to this statement that his disciples responded. Quick and easy divorce is not God's plan for marriage nor does such a thing bring glory and honor unto Him.

How does marriage bring glory unto God? <sup>31</sup>*For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.* <sup>32</sup>*This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*" (Eph. 5:31, 32) Anytime the word mystery is mentioned in the Bible you know that something big is being revealed. Paul likens the relationship that exists between a husband and wife to the relationship that exists between Christ and the Church. This is the mystery. This is a deeper meaning of marriage that man did

not previously know. This is how marriage brings glory unto God. The marriage relationship is patterned after Christ's relationship to the Church.

The highest meaning and the most ultimate purpose of marriage is to put the covenant relationship of Christ and His Church on display. <sup>24</sup>*Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.* <sup>25</sup>*Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.* (Eph. 5:24, 25) Before I make my point about this passage of scripture I want to clarify something. God comes first and foremost in our life. Ultimately everything that we do is to bring glory and honor unto His name. With that in mind, listen carefully to what I am about to say. The bottom line for the marital relationship is that the wife is to live for her husband and the husband is to give his life for his wife.

The wife represents the Church in the relationship and the man represents Christ in the relationship. Just as the Church gladly submits unto Christ, the wife is to gladly submit unto her husband. Wives do you place aside your own desires, ambitions, or preferences for your husband? Do you live your life for him? Likewise, just as Christ gave His life for the Church, the husband is to give his life for his wife. Most men could probably envision themselves dying for their wife if the situation called for it, but what about the small every day events of life. Men, do you die to self for your wife? Do you place aside your own desires, ambitions, or preferences for the benefit of your wife? Doing so brings glory and honor unto God. Divorce and remarriage is horrific in God's eyes because it misrepresents Christ's covenant with the Church.

When a man and woman marry, they are covenanting before God to become one flesh. They are promising to permanently join their lives with one another in the most comprehensive way possible. The statement "one flesh" means that their lives are to be woven together. The husband and wife are bonded together into a relational oneness. It is a total sharing of ideas, beliefs, joys, difficulties, triumphs, failures, possessions, and bodies.

The marriage relationship is to take precedent over all other human relationships. A man's wife should be the most important person in his life. Likewise, a woman's husband should be the most important person in her life. *"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."* (Gen. 2:24) The wife is now under her husband's spiritual leadership. Both husband and wife have left mother and father to start their own home.

In this new relationship the Bible states that they are to cleave to one another. The Hebrew word "cleave" means to pursue hard (like a continual pressing), it is a firmly joined

state.<sup>1</sup> It is a permanent and abiding union. Only the pursuit of God is to be greater than a husband and wife's pursuit of one another.

This is even true in regards to the parent-child relationship. When the parent-child relationship is made a priority over the marriage relationship, great harm is caused to the family. The marriage relationship is basic, not the parent-child relationship.

Children do not need for their parents to build their life around them. Don't give the best of your time and interests to your children to the neglect of your spouse. Children need parents who know how to love and live with each other. How else will children learn to build solid marriages of their own? They need to see their parents live as husband and wife. One of the best things that a father can do for his children is to be a good husband to their mother. Also, the mother needs to be a good wife to the children's father.

In homes where this is not the case, several problems often develop. Many couples who live their lives for their children often find themselves with troubled marriages once their kids leave the house. All of their time and effort has been spent on their children and not on building a relationship with one another. As a result, no relationship exists. Also, the parent may be unwilling to let go of the child. When the child marries, the spouse holds one hand while the parent holds the other. This will lead to tragic consequences for all involved.

The parent-child relationship changes over time. It is close, but it is never to be as close as the husband-wife relationship. The marital relationship is to last and not be broken. It is the primary relationship.

The marriage relationship as God intended it should serve to bring each partner closer to Him. It provides the greatest potential for self-denial and obedience to the relationship principals of God's word. *"Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."* (Phil. 2:4, 5) Christ has set the ultimate example of how we are to treat one another and there is no better way for us to follow His example than to treat our spouse according to His teachings.

In closing, in order for marriage to be successful we have to learn how not to exalt ourselves. We need to stop asking ourselves questions like "What's in it for me?" or "What will I get out of it?" Instead, we need to ask "What can I do for my spouse?" or "What can I give?" We need to stop living for ourselves, stop destroying relationships, and start living for God. The oneness and spiritual growth that God desires for marriage can only be achieved when each partner helps the other become as much like Christ as possible.

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<sup>1</sup> Vine, W. E. 1996. *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*. Nashville, TN : Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1996. p. 104.