



# 1: God's Blueprint for Marriage

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*Ps 127:1 -Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it.*

One survey out of *Marriage and Divorce Magazine* said one out of every three marriages end in divorce. If the two married at a church wedding, one out of 50 end in divorce. Where both husband and wife attend church regularly, read their Bibles, and pray together, one out of 1,005 end in divorce.

## WHAT WILL WE BUILD ON?

### Matthew 7:24-27 (NKJV)

<sup>24</sup> "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:

<sup>25</sup> and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

<sup>26</sup> But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand:

<sup>27</sup> and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

1. What does Jesus mean by "building on sand?"
2. How does Jesus describe those who build on sand?
3. What are some modern examples of how people build marriage on sand?
4. What does Jesus mean by "building on rock?"
5. Describe some modern examples of marriages that you believe to be built on rock. What attributes do these marriages have that are honorable?
6. Does building on the rock mean you will not experience the storms of life? Why is this significant?
7. How does Jesus describe those who build on the rock?

**MAKE IT PERSONAL** – Ask yourself if you are going to build your marriage on the rock or on the sand. Ask yourself if you will build your marriage as a wise person or a foolish person.

## Your Marriage is NOT a Contract – It's a Covenant Between you and God!

### Characteristics of a Contract

1. Contracts are most often for a limited period of time.
2. Contracts most often deal with specific actions.
3. Contracts are based on an "if-then" mentality.
4. Contracts are motivated by a desire to get something we want.
5. Contracts are sometimes unspoken.

### Distinctions of a Covenant

1. Covenants are initiated for the benefit of the other person.
2. In covenant relationships, people make UNCONDITIONAL PROMISES (called VOWS).
3. Covenant relationships are based on steadfast love, based on agape love, based on the faithfulness of God. (*read Psalm 89:30-37, esp. v. 34; Malachi 2:14; Proverbs 2:17*)

## God's Original Design for Marriage

### Genesis 2:18-25 (NKJV)

<sup>18</sup> And the Lord God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him." <sup>19</sup> Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought *them* to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that *was* its name. <sup>20</sup> So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him. <sup>21</sup> And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. <sup>22</sup> Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to 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 a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. <sup>25</sup> And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

1. Who originated the marriage institution?
2. What is the significance about God creating "woman" last? A) In the ascending order of creation, she is the "pinnacle"? B) In being made after man, she is an "after-thought"? C) "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again"?
3. How do you define "helper"? Does "helper" sound like a lesser person? An equal person? A greater person?
4. What do you think God meant when he referred to Eve as a "helper" (v. 20)? A) She will serve Adam? B) She will be a great partner? C) She will be a source of strength? D) Adam and Eve will work together?
5. How would you feel being called a "helper" for someone else? A) Useful? B) Used? C) Close physically? D) Like a good fit? E) Special? F) other: \_\_\_\_\_
6. According to Genesis 2:24, what is the primary human relationship in life?
7. Why do you think God would specifically tell us to "leave" father and mother?
8. Why do you think God would specifically tell us to "cleave" to one another?

### MAKE IT PERSONAL:

- a. Will it be difficult to "leave" your parents? In what ways is your marriage relationship being adversely affected because you are following your parents' example of handling stress, facing problems, etc.? Once married, Will your spouse be the number one human being in your life, especially when that would put you at odds with your parents?

***"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."***

God's all-time blueprint for a good marriage. [Gen 2:24, Matt 19:5, Mark 10:7-8, and Eph 5:31]

### I. God's blueprint for marriage directs husbands and wives to leave their fathers and mothers.

#### What does it mean to leave your parents?

1. Well, it certainly does not mean that you abandon them. (Exodus 20:12; Mark 7:9-11; 1 Timothy 5:8)
2. Nor does it mean that you must make a great geographical move.

#### To leave your parents means that your relationship to your parents must be radically changed.

1. It means that you establish an adult relationship with them.
2. It means that you must be more concerned about your mate's ideas, opinions, and practices than those of your parents.
3. It means that you must not be slavishly dependent on your parents for affection, approval, assistance, and counsel.
4. It means that you must eliminate any bad attitudes toward your parents, or you will be tied emotionally to them regardless of how far you move from them.
5. It means that you must stop trying to change your mate simply because your parents do not like him the way he is.

### II. God's blueprint for marriage directs husbands and wives to cleave to one another.

**A good marriage is based more on commitment than feeling or animal attraction.**

1. Acc. to Malachi 2:14 and Proverbs 2:17, marriage is an irrevocable covenant to which we are bound.
2. Therefore, when two people get married they promise that they will be faithful to each other regardless of what happens.
  - a. The wife promises that she will be faithful even if the husband is afflicted with the 4 “B’s”: **bulges, baldness, bunions and bifocals**; even if he loses his health, his wealth, his job, his charm; even if someone more exciting comes along.
  - b. The husband promises to be faithful even if the wife loses her beauty and appeal; even if she is not as neat and tidy or as submissive as he would like her to be; even if she does not satisfy his sexual desires completely; even if she spends money foolishly or is a terrible cook.
  - c. Marriage means that a husband and wife enter into a relationship in which they commit themselves to each other regardless of what problems arise.
3. God’s kind of marriage involves cleaving to one another in sickness and health, poverty and wealth, pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, good times and bad times, agreements and disagreements. God’s kind of marriage means that people know that they must face problems, discuss them, seek God’s help in them, resolve them rather than run from them, because there is no way out.

### III. God’s blueprint for marriage involves one flesh.

**At its most elementary level, this is referring to sexual relations or physical union.** Consider 1 Corinthians 6:16. Within the bounds of marriage, sexual relations are holy, good, and beautiful, but if they are entered into apart from the “leaving and cleaving” they are ugly, degrading and sinful. (Hebrews 13:4.)

#### **But becoming one flesh involves more than the marriage act.**

1. Indeed the marriage act is the symbol or culmination of a more complete oneness.
2. One definition of marriage that I really like is: Marriage is a total commitment and a total sharing of the total person with another person until death.
3. Total intimacy and deep unity, however, do not mean total uniformity or sameness.

#### **But you know as well as I do that total oneness is not easily achieved.**

- a. Sometimes marital oneness is destroyed by the sin of selfishness.
- b. Sometimes it is marred by the sin of pride.
- c. Sometimes it is broken by the sin of bitterness or ingratitude or stubbornness or unwholesome speech or neglect or impatience or harshness or cruelty.

#### **This Session’s Assignments:**

1. Memorize Psalm 127:1 and/or Genesis 2:24
2. Listen to audio “God’s Purposes for Your Marriage” [www.joshfranklin.org/pre-marital-counseling.html](http://www.joshfranklin.org/pre-marital-counseling.html)
3. Think about how your marriage will impact other family relationships you already have.
4. Think about your wedding vows – would you like to write them, or would you like me to help you?