



*dba
New
Covenant
Church*

Sunday School Lesson

ADULTS

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MARRIAGE – A DIVINE INSTITUTION

Almighty God, our Sovereign Creator has the right to tell us which principles should govern our covenant marriage relationship.

Genesis 1: 26 – 27 God created man in His own image

Genesis 2: 18 God said it is not good that the man should be alone

Genesis 2: 19 – God creates all animals with a mate; then He creates Woman from the man's side.

From his side to be his equal and help mate; under his arm to be protected, near his heart to be loved.

Genesis 2: 24 LEAVING: Mark 7: 9 – 13 We have a responsibility of our parents, etc., not to them. St. Matthew 12: 46 – 50. They left all and followed him. St. Luke 5: 11, St. Matthew 10: 34 – 38. It is not always easy; it is often hard to see a baby leave its mother's womb and see a doctor cut the umbilical cord, yet it is necessary for growth and development. It is also hard for a parent to see their child leave for the first day of school. Just as babies can't grow physically unless the cord is cut, they can't receive an education unless they leave home. A marriage can't mature unless both partners are willing to leave their parents and all lesser relationships, and establish a new family. There are men and women who can't build strong covenant relationships because they are still tied to mother's "umbilical cord"; not willing to leave all attachments to their parents, jobs, education, sports, hobbies, past lives, friends, or any work: be it church or otherwise, so that they can build a strong marital relationship. Leaving means also leaving behind our dependency on our parents for financial support, authority, attitudes and influences.

We must also learn to leave behind our hurts and wounds from our childhood, through the healing power of the Holy Spirit. With the help of a loving spouse and the love of Christ we can be set free from our past, and be able to be the understanding partner God wants us to be.

CLEAVING: A leaving must occur before a cleaving can take place. We must leave all lesser relationships in order to cleave or cement our new divine relationship and establish a happy home. Cleaving suggest fidelity and the idea of being permanently glued or joined together. It is used to express the covenant God's people should have with him (Deuteronomy 10: 20, cf. 11: 22, 131: 4, 30: 20). The word is used to describe Ruth's refusal to leave her mother-in-law, Naomi (Ruth 1: 14).

In the sight of God, cleaving means wholehearted commitment in every area of your being. It means to be permanently glued together rather than temporarily taped together. Cleaving involves unswerving loyalty to ones' marital partner. To cleave to "his wife" this means no unfaithfulness: a man cannot be glued to his wife and flirt or engage in sexual intercourse with another woman. In a marriage covenant, cleaving does not allow the freedom to leave when the relationship is no longer to your satisfaction. If the freedom to leave is kept as an option, it will hinder the total effort to develop a covenant marital relationship (I Peter 3: 7).

Once married, we should ask ourselves, *Will this action, word, decision, or attitude draw us closer or pull us apart? Will it build up or tear down our covenantal marriage relationship?* For a Christian committed to living by the principles of God's word, any course of action which weakens the cleaving must be regarded as contrary to God's design for a marriage covenant and therefore is SIN. If we do any less, we can be called "Married Singles" where both partners continue to follow their independent lifestyles while sharing the same roof and bed. (Selah).

It is no wonder that many marriages fail because partners are not willing to leave selfish ideas in order to cleave to each other for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health. To sum it up, we must be willing to cleave to our marital partner, avoiding any thoughts, words, or actions that could weaken our loyalty and commitment to each other.

BECOMING ONE FLESH: leaving, cleaving, becoming one flesh. As husband and wife leave lesser relationships and learn to cleave to one another, they become a new entity, "One Flesh". The phrase "one flesh", is often misunderstood to refer to the sexual union. It is similar to the word however it does not just mean your flesh, but your whole being.

To become one flesh means to become one functioning unit. It involves complete uniting into one personality with the other in a community of interest and pursuits; a union consummated in intercourse. Only through the Holy Spirit's guidance are two persons able to interpenetrate one another's lives to become one flesh, or one functioning unit (Ecclesiastes 4: 9 – 12). Couples that have been married for many years start to think, act, and feel as one: they become one in mind, heart and spirit: that is why divorce is so devastating. Divorce does not leave two separate persons, but two halves or fractions of a person.

The phrase "one flesh" does also refer to the physical or sexual aspect of marriage. Paul uses the phrase to explain it this way in 1Corinthians 6: 16 – 17. Sexual intercourse, per se, however, does not automatically assure that a man and a woman become one in this mystical, emotional and spiritual unity. Generally intercourse without spiritual communion often leaves people divided, alienated, and bitter toward one another. II Corinthians 6: 14, warns about being unequally yoked together with an unbeliever. Such a union will never create one flesh as God designed. Thus sexual intercourse alone does not bring about the real oneness.

To achieve the Biblical one flesh union, sexual intercourse in marriage must be the natural result or fruit of love, the crowning act of marital union (I Corinthians. 7: 1 – 5). If sex is not the expression of genuine love, respect, and commitment, then it offers only physical contact while depriving the partners of mental and spiritual unity. Sexual desire must become the desire of the total union and oneness of the body, soul and spirit between marital partners or else we are little more than animals.

GRADUAL PROCESS: A man and a woman who come together in a marriage do not automatically become one flesh when they exchange their vows. Their personalities are still free and independent toward their own wills. But as they live together as husband and wife along with the Holy Spirit; they must realize that they don't have to totally give up their individuality while striving to become one flesh. They must not allow their differences to divide them, but must learn to accept them: viewing them not as a problem but as complementary to the one flesh. They can still be themselves and still be one unit. The husband learns to accept the wife as she is because he needs to be accepted as he is. Their differences contribute, and are steps to achieve tier oneness because they are viewed as complementary and not contradictions. **The perfect marriage is formed not simply found.**

Becoming one flesh is beautifully exemplified in the children of a married couple. In their children husband and wife are, without question, indisputable, united into one person. Something marvelous and permanent

happened when they were born, they became the sum total of what the parents are. What happens biologically in children occurs psychologically and spiritually in husband and wife relationship as the two gradually become “One flesh” and new functioning unit. That is why extramarital sexual relationships are not only immoral, but also destructive to the one flesh relationship (St. Matthew 19: 9).

Becoming one flesh also implies staying with your partner until death do us part because a man can’t become one flesh with more than one women; it requires us to be monogamous or with one partner for life. The Old Testament persons who violated the one flesh principle by taking more than one wife paid the price for their transgressions. Problems of all kinds developed in their families as their wives became jealous or felt exploited, degraded or hated.

To become a one flesh functioning unit, husbands and wives must learn to accept their differences as complimenting or sharpening their oneness and must reserve their sexual expression of all kinds exclusively for each other.

Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder (St. Matthew 19: 6).

Excerpts:

Dwelling Together: Rediscovering the Principles, Purpose, & Power of Marriage

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MARRIAGE A DIVINE INSTITUTION

What is meant by Divine institution?

Why did God create women from man's side?

Do you feel your spouse has fully left their parents and other relationships as the Bible state?

What attachments do you feel they are holding on to? Parents, Hobbies, Job, education, friends, self and selfishness?

Has your spouse left behind past hurts and wounds from their childhood?

A leaving must occur before a cleaving or cementing can take place. How did Ruth's example of cleaving speak to your soul?

Do you feel your spouse has a wholehearted commitment to the relationship?

What are some areas that they can prove more loyal and trustworthy?

Does your spouse need more pureness when it comes to lust, flirting, drawing back or drawing away from being fully engaged in the covenantal marriage relationship?

What actions, words or decisions or attitude is drawing us apart instead of pulling us closer?

Do you realize that any action, words, or attitudes which are contrary to God's plan for covenantal marriage is sin? That's why marriage is a Divine institution; to break it is braking God's commandments?

What is married Singles? How do you keep from becoming such?

Leaving, Cleaving and becoming one flesh. One Flesh does not just mean the sexual relationship but your whole being. What do you feel is needed for you to have more oneness?

What do you feel is needed in your sexual union?

Biblical One Flesh must be built and the fruit of love must come before sexual intercourse to fulfil the true meaning of a marriage covenant. What areas would you like to talk to Minister about?
