

“They Shall Be One Flesh”

Genesis 2:18-25 records one of the most wonderful creations—woman. Of man and woman, God said: “They shall be one flesh (Gen. 2:24).” Of this union of man and woman, Jesus quoted this passage from Genesis and added: “So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.” Mt. 19:6.

Breaking the sacred union.

Only the most dire of circumstances can break this sacred union created by God:

- *Fornication* in Mt. 19:9: “I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery.”
- *Death of a Partner* in Rom. 7:2-3: “For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. 3 So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man.”
- *An Unbeliever Leaves a Christian* in I Cor. 7:10-15: “ If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her. 13 And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him. . . . 15 But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases.”

Paul further teaches that a wife is not to depart from her husband. 11 But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife (1 Cor 7:10-11).

Illicit relationships.

The two become one flesh even in illicit relationships. In I Cor. 6:16 Paul says: “Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For ‘the two,’ He says, ‘shall become one flesh.’” In verse 18, he adds: “Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.” Sexual immorality is a devastating sin that destroys our marriages and our own bodies also, to say nothing of how it alienates us forever from the Lord.

Love and respect, the key to successful marriage

In true Christian marriages, husbands and wives love and respect one another as themselves. Paul describes the New Testament law and spirit of proper marriage in Eph. 5:21-33:

- Each must submit to the other as children of God
- As the church submits to Christ, wives submit to their husbands.
- As Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, husbands love their own wives.
- Husbands love their wives as their own bodies.
- Husbands and wives are united; the two become one flesh.

True Christian marriages

True Christian marriages do not always come easy. Our world fosters and encourages divorce and re-marriage, leaving many children without proper and nourishing parents and homes. To leave children

desolate in a broken marriage without Christ, the church, and two loving, respectful parents is the worst of worlds for all. Christians should struggle to avoid sexual immorality and work to create tender, loving, and caring marriages. The church and the home will be central to our lives. The love we share will extend to our children, giving them hope and promise in this world and the next.

Conclusion.

Marriage is sacred union created by God. Faithful Christians should work to keep this union intact. Sexual immorality is destructive to the Christian life and the marriage union. The true basis for a solid marriage is love and respect, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for it.

Study questions.

1. How and when was marriage created? _____

2. How can the marriage union be scripturally broken? _____

3. How does sexual immorality destroy both the body and the soul? _____
4. List five characteristics of a sound marriage from Eph 5:21-33 _____
