

BIBLICAL MARRIAGE | WEEK 1

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Marriage is God's idea, and it began at creation with one man and one woman. Marriage is not a man-made institution. God ordained marriage and gave it to Adam and Eve as a means of fulfilling His command to fill the earth with His glory. Marriage is also the beautiful reflection of the relationship Christ has with His bride, the church. Marriage, then, is ultimately more about God and His glory than it is about mankind's pleasure or our imperfect plans and desires.

Every building has a designer who draws up blueprints and plans; the design is what defines that structure and what gives the builder the roadmap for construction. A deviation from those plans can cause both structural and superficial damage. In the same way, marriage has a Sovereign Designer who knows how best to live out this covenant relationship. He has given His plans for how to establish the marriage relationship and how to maintain it for His glory and for our good.

When we seek to live out marriage according to God's design, we experience the blessings, protections, and provisions that come with doing marriage God's way. When we attempt to "do" marriage our way, we will experience conflict, pain, brokenness, and empty promises. Because marriage comes from God, the safest and most pleasurable marriage relationship is the one that is anchored to Christ and that seeks to follow God's blueprint every step of the way.

This month, during the Ordinary Challenge, you're going to have the opportunity to spend some time thinking, praying, and seeking to "do" marriage God's way. God's plan is not about building a marriage that looks good on the outside or that can endure a few bumps along the way. The focus of this challenge is on building, or rebuilding, your marriage on the foundation of Jesus Christ and then living it out each and every day for His glory and your best.

Week 1 challenge

For married and engaged couples:

Think | Take some time this week to read and meditate on Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:4-6, and Ephesians 5:22-33. Write down the specific instructions or ideas that God lays out for how He wants marriage to be. Take a few minutes to contrast God's blueprints for marriage with how our culture speaks about marriage. How does your marriage compare to what God desires marriage to be?

Pray | Spend some time thanking God, in prayer, for the gift of marriage and for His clear plan for how He wants us to live out the marriage covenant. Pray, with your spouse if possible, that God would help you to live out your marriage according to His plans.

Do | Share with your spouse, a friend, or your Small Group what you're learning about God's plan for marriage and the specific ways you're praying for your marriage this week.

For singles:

Think | Take some time to read Ephesians 5:22-33, and record what you learn from this passage about God's blueprint for marriage.

Pray | As you meditate on this passage, take some time to pray and ask the Lord to help you be the man or woman you need to be to live out this covenant relationship should God open that door for you. Ask Him to reveal areas where He wants you to grow and develop in this season of life.

Do | Share what you're learning and praying for with a friend or your Small Group.