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Building a Marriage That Really Works

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Kay Arthur, David & BJ Lawson

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BIBLE STUDIES

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PRECEPT MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL



WATERBROOK
P R E S S

BUILDING A MARRIAGE THAT REALLY WORKS

PUBLISHED BY WATERBROOK PRESS

12265 Oracle Boulevard, Suite 200

Colorado Springs, Colorado 80921

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ISBN 978-0-307-45757-8

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Published in the United States by WaterBrook Multnomah, an imprint of the Crown Publishing Group, a division of Random House Inc., New York.

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Printed in the United States of America

2009

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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BUILDING A MARRIAGE THAT REALLY WORKS

As children, little girls often used to play dress up, with a blanket draped over their heads to serve as a “bride’s veil” as they dreamed about their future wedding day. Together, little girls and boys played “house,” with Daddy going to work and Mommy taking care of the kids and cooking the meals. Daddy would come home and kiss Mommy, then they would sit down to dinner and talk about the events of the day.

Such innocent days soon gave way to grownup responsibilities, where the experience of real-life marriage seems much more difficult than we dreamed as children. And in these days where the definitions of family and home have been stretched and challenged, the husband-wife relationship presents more challenges

than ever before. Divorce has either directly or indirectly affected virtually all of us. Blended families and multiple-income households seem to be the standard of our day.

So how can we follow God's design for marriage in our modern-day world? In the weeks ahead we will take a look at the institution of marriage and the roles of the husband and the wife, as well as examine key principles regarding communication, love, and finances. Through this study you will discover how to establish and maintain the kind of marriage God intended you to have—one that will last “until death us do part.”

WEEK ONE

After God created the heavens and the earth and everything on the earth, He formed the most magnificent of all His creatures—man and woman. More detail is given regarding the sixth day of creation than any of the others, indicating the significance of these distinctive creations. God created man and woman for a unique relationship with Him and with each other.

We are going to begin our study this week by looking at God’s design for marriage. Can it truly be a permanent, meaningful, joyful relationship?

OBSERVE

Genesis is the book of beginnings. Let’s take a look at the Creation account of man and woman and the beginning of this institution we call “marriage.”

Leader: Read aloud Genesis 1:26-28.

- Have the group underline every reference to man, including any pronouns.

DISCUSS

- What did you learn from marking *man* in each verse?
- What did you learn from these verses about male and female?

GENESIS 1:26-28

²⁶ Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

²⁷ God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

28 God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

- What role and responsibilities did God give to both male and female in verse 28?
- Could God’s instructions be carried out by two men or two women? What does this tell you about the institution of marriage?
- Discuss why it is significant that God gave the same responsibilities to both the male and the female.

INSIGHT


Genesis 1 gives us the big picture of Creation, an overview that tells us at a glance what happened from the first day of Creation through the sixth. In Genesis 2, God focuses on the details of man’s creation. Some consider the two accounts in chapters 1 and 2 contradictory, but they are not. They simply record the events from different perspectives.

OBSERVE

The beginning of Genesis 2 gives us further insight into man's creation.

Leader: *Read aloud Genesis 2:7-8,18-20.*

Have the group...

- *mark every reference to **God**, including pronouns, with a triangle: *
- *underline every reference to **man**, including pronouns and synonyms.*

DISCUSS

- What did you learn from marking the references to man?
- After God created man and placed him in the garden, what did God say?
- According to these verses, why did God make woman?

GENESIS 2:7-8,18-20

7 Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

8 The LORD God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed.

18 Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him."

19 Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what

he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name.

20 The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.

GENESIS 2:21-24

21 So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place.

22 The LORD God fashioned into a

INSIGHT

Man needed “a helper suitable for him.” The word for *helper* in Hebrew does not mean “servant” or “slave.” The word is most commonly used in the Bible in reference to God as our helper, often in a military sense. A helper in this sense would be someone—superior or equal—who comes alongside to support another in a situation that can’t be handled alone. According to this passage, man needed help—a partner every bit his equal whose strengths would compensate for his weaknesses.

OBSERVE

Leader: Read aloud Genesis 2:21-24.

- Have the group circle every reference to *woman*, including pronouns.

DISCUSS

- Discuss how God created the woman.
- Looking at what you've marked in this passage, ask the "5 Ws and an H"—who, what, when, where, why, and how—to see what the text tells you about woman.
- **Why** was she created?
- **When** was she created, relative to man's creation?
- For **whom** was she created? Why was this important?
- According to verse 23, **what** did man say when God brought the woman to him?
- "For this reason" in verse 24 refers back to verses 21-23. According to verse 24, what is to happen when a couple marries?

woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man.

23 The man 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."

24 For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

WRAP IT UP

God designed Adam and Eve for a unique relationship with Him. No other creatures enjoyed this kind of union. The first couple was made in God's image, was given dominion over the rest of creation, and enjoyed daily fellowship with the Creator.

Tragically, Adam and Eve made a wrong choice; they ate the forbidden fruit and sin entered the world. In the weeks ahead, we'll look at how this affected the marriage relationship. For now, we need to acknowledge that, because of sin, marriage takes work; however, God enables believers to succeed despite the challenges by providing not only an instruction manual but also His Holy Spirit, who enables us to carry out the instructions in Scripture. All we have to do is to follow the directions carefully.

God intended marriage to be permanent, an intimate relationship in which two are irrevocably joined together as one. Marriage is an earthly picture of the relationship between Jesus and His church, the bride of Christ. Marriages are intended to be living testimonies of Jesus' inseparable union with believers. When husbands and wives fight, grow distant, or separate, God's portrait of the spiritual relationship is marred. We'll learn more about this in upcoming lessons.



WATERBROOK MULTNOMAH PUBLISHING GROUP

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No-Homework Bible Studies

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