

IMPACT

I **M**ust **P**ersonally **A**cknowledge **C**hrist **T**oday
Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; *in all your ways acknowledge Him* and He shall direct your path.
Proverbs 3:5-6

Passage: Ecclesiastes 5:4-5 states, “When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; for He has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed—better not to vow than to vow and not pay.”

Quote: God’s plan for marriage is one man and one woman fulfilling their vows made before Him for a lifetime of growing and giving.

The most basic and necessary expression of biblical love is to be found in the home. Tragically, in society, and in some churches as well, there is an assault on God’s design for the family. How does the Bible define and describe marriage. Genesis chapter 2 tells us, “And the LORD God said, ‘*It is not good that man should be alone*; I will make him a helper comparable to him....’ 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. Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a **woman**, and He brought her to the **man**. 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.’ Therefore a **man** shall **leave** his father and mother and **be joined** to his **wife**, and they shall become **one flesh**.”¹

The words “be joined” can also be translated “be glued or welded together.” God intends for the union that is to begin with the pronouncement of Mr. and Mrs. “John Doe” to last for as long as they live. They will have done far more than enter into a civil contract. *They will vow before God to embrace a covenant of companionship.*¹ A civil contract says, “I take you for myself to serve my needs.” A covenant before God says, “I give myself to you to serve your needs.” A civil contract says, “I have to fulfill my responsibility according to law.” A covenant says, “I want to fulfill my responsibility by God’s grace, for His glory, and for your good.” A civil contract implies, “If you fail in your responsibility, I am free from mine.” A covenant promises, “Regardless if you fail in your responsibility, I will be faithful to my vows before God.”²

In a biblical marriage the husband is a picture

of the sacrificial, exclusive love that Christ has for His church. He takes complete responsibility for his wife’s welfare. The wife is a picture of the devotion that the church has to Christ as her Head. Just as the church entrusts herself to the protection, provision and leadership of Christ, the wife entrusts herself to the protection, provision and leadership of her husband. Marriage is also the God-honoring means for moral purity, for having children and for enjoying benefits designed by the Giver of every perfect gift.

Happiness for a Christian couple will be found in bringing to bear the fruit of God’s Spirit on their marriage.

Love, the Glue of Biblical relationships! “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.”³ What might walking in the Spirit look like in a Christian marriage? They are to love each other intentionally and exclusively like they love no other person. They are to demonstrate that joyful sense of well-being and that peace of mind that comes by trusting God in the triumphs and the trials that He brings into their life. They are to show longsuffering in the face of adversity, kindness or tender concern in times of disagreement and goodness in meeting each other’s needs. They are to be faithful to God, as well as loyal and trustworthy to each other. They are to maintain a considerate and gentle spirit in the midst of offenses by others towards them. In all of this, they are to practice self-control by governing the natural tendency that we all have to be selfish, harsh, unloving and defensive. Some may respond, “How can we possibly remember and fulfill all of that?” Apart from God’s enabling, none of us can. The short version of God’s expectation for couples is “Love the Lord your **God** with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength and **your spouse as yourself**.”

¹ Gen.:18, 21-23 ² Malachi 2:14-16; Prov.2:17 ³ Galatians 5:22-24