

SS: Marriage, Male & Female, 2023

Lesson 2: Male & Female Leaving, Cleaving, Weaving—Marriage

1. The Unique Significance of Genesis 2:24

This statement about marriage is found at the very beginning of Scripture, a key part of the creation account. It is the Bible's first statement about marriage. It is thus foundational. Also, it is this passage that is quoted by Jesus in his teaching on marriage (in both Matthew and Mark). And it is likewise quoted by the Apostle Paul in his most detailed teaching on marriage, in Eph. 5:22-33.

2. The MEANING of Genesis 2:24—Leaving, Cleaving, Weaving

1) LEAVING

Q: In what way does the word “Therefore” connect v24 with v23? A: Just as one become two, bone of bone and flesh of flesh, so thereafter two would become one, one flesh.

Q: What does leaving mean? A: Namely, marriage in its essence involves being tied to your spouse in a way that you cannot and should not be to your parents.

2) CLEAVING- *Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and **hold fast** (cleave, KJV) to his wife....*

i. Note how the words “hold fast” are used elsewhere in the Bible:

Deuteronomy 13:4; Job 2:9; Proverbs 4:4; Isaiah 56:4; Luke 8:15; 1 Corinthians 15:2; Hebrews 3:6; Revelation 3:11

Q: What do all these references to “hold fast” presuppose?

ii. Marriage is a COVENANT.

i) Demonstrated

Malachi 2:14 But you say, "Why does he not?" Because the LORD was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife **by covenant**.

Proverbs 2:16 So you will be delivered from the forbidden woman, from the adulteress with her smooth words, ¹⁷ who forsakes the companion of her youth and **forgets the covenant of her God;**

ii) Defined

The essential idea of a covenant, in Scripture, is that of **an oath-bound promise**. It is **a vow, a sworn pledge**. Note how this essential idea is seen in the following passage, the first context in which the word “covenant” appears in Scripture. Having been introduced in Gen. 6:18, before the flood, afterward, in **Gen. 9:8-17**, the word “covenant” is used 7x.

iii) **Described**

Q: In what way does the immoral woman “forget the covenant OF HER GOD” (Pr. 2:17)?

A: Implicitly, if not explicitly (declaration of intent), marriage involves a solemn commitment to GOD.

Biblical counselor Wayne Mack wrote: *“Marriage means that a husband and wife enter into a relationship for which they accept full responsibility and in which they commit themselves to each other regardless of what problems arise. ...God’s kind of marriage means that people know that they must face problems, discuss them, seek God’s help in them, resolve them rather than run from them, because there is no way out. They are committed to one another for life. They must cleave to one another today and tomorrow, as long as they both shall live” (W Mack, Strengthening Your Marriage, pg. 3-4).*

Q: Marriages have faced sin, Satan, and suffering since the fall. How has modern Western culture contributed to the challenges that married couples face?

3) **WEAVING (“and they shall become one flesh”)**

Eph. 5:28-33 In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, **just as Christ does the church,** ³⁰ **because we are members of his body.** ³¹ “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” ³² **This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.** ³³ However, **let each one of you love his wife as himself,** and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

Q: Given the teaching of that passage, what is the most foundational or basic meaning of a “ONE-FLESH” relationship?

A: Marriage was designed to illustrate this higher, eternal union. Mack comments: *“The marriage act is the symbol or culmination of a more complete oneness, of a total giving of yourself to another person. Marriage is a total commitment and a total sharing of the total person with another person until death. God’s intention is that when two people get married they should share everything—their bodies, their possessions, their insights, their ideas, their abilities, their problems, their successes, their sufferings, their failures, etc.” (p4).*

Q: Why does Jesus assign such weight to “sexual immorality” in Matt 19:9?

Q: What are some of the main obstacles to total oneness?

