

Series: YOU & ME INCOPORATED
Topic: The Covenant Perspective to Marriage
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Text: Genesis 2:18
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‘And the Lord God said, “It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.”’ – Genesis 2:18

If you are married, I want you to look within you and ask, “Is God in my marriage?” This is a very critical question. However, if you are single, ask yourself if you are inviting God into your relationship. As we look at the covenant perspective to marriage, I want to start by saying that marriage is neither a man's idea nor is it a culture of any tribe. Marriage, according to the scriptures, is God’s divine idea. God instituted marriage for the welfare and happiness of mankind. He said about the first man that “it is not good that the man should be alone; I will make for him a helper that is suitable for him” Another translation describes the helper as someone *comparable* to him (the first man). There is no controversy when God says it is not good that man should be alone. It is interesting to note that with all the enormous responsibilities God gave Adam and his (Adam’s) seeming adequacies as a single person, God still saw a need for him to have a helper.

The Garden of Eden happens to be God’s first enterprise – the first thing that God put together to work well and He decided to put a single man in charge because of the confidence he had in him. The Garden was a very big venture that was central to God’s plan for humanity – it was valuable to God. God entrusted His creation to a single man to be the CEO! You can be single and be valuable.

In **Genesis 1:14-15** the bible says, ‘and the Lord God put man in the Garden that He has planted to keep and tend [cultivate and to protect] it.’ God saw that although Adam was doing a great job, it was not good for him to be alone and it was from that point that God instituted marriage. Marriage was an idea from God and so it means all the other ideas with which we are going to sustain marriage must also in one way or the other be traceable to the source – God.

When you get a common sense idea from friends while you are hanging out or while clubbing (if you still do!), you need to ask yourself, “Is this coming from the mind of God or is this a human construct?” this is important because when you bring that idea into your home without a covenant understanding of marriage, you are going to do something that may destroy the marriage. Thus, it has become imperative that we understand and recognize that marriage is God’s idea and God has so many instructions in His word for us to run our marriage as a covenant construct.

A covenant is a spiritual commitment. The covenant that we have with God is enacted by the blood of the sinless Son of God. If sinful mortals enter into covenant based on their blood and they respect it, how then can we say that the God will not respect the covenant initiated and perfected by the blood of His sinless Son?

In **Ephesians 5:21-33 (Message Translation)**, Paul compared the covenant that we have in marriage to that which exists between the church and God – between us and Christ. If and when we deal with marriage from the covenant perspective, all things will fall in their rightful places. We have to make a choice whether we want to grow in our covenant with God or not by creating time to develop ourselves spiritually so that we will not be covenant breakers but those growing in it. God waits for us; He puts us in His zone of grace. This grace does two things for us: it guarantees forgiveness and brings empowerment. God is always waiting for us to give us grace. Two people in marriage are in the position of grace.

One distinguishing factor of the marriage covenant is that God is in it. One plus one is not equals to two, but one. This shows that it is beyond human factor and comprehension. A marriage is not complete without God. In this generation, marriage has been reduced to something that happens between just two people – that is not from God’s perspective. The marriage covenant requires that we exhibit God’s nature because something flows through us that must have a bearing in our marriage. The bible says that two are **better** than one but what we see these days is two are **bitter** than one; that is not God’s original intention. We should run our marriage not on the capacity of our mind but on God’s power. God will always leave a room that only He can fill in marriage. When marriage works, it will be one of the ways that you will enjoy the love of God in life.

In Ephesians 5, it is clear that couples are in marriage as God’s representatives; everything we do in marriage should be done on God’s behalf. It is important to know that God has an important role to play in every home. If you don’t bring God into yours, it will not work. When marriage works the way it is supposed to be, it becomes the best place to participate and partake of God’s love. God wants us to experience His love in and through our marriages and relationships.

Two Fears People Often Have With Marriage as a Covenant

1. **Fear of not dealing with our spouses based on met and unmet expectations.** In covenant arrangement, we don’t need to look at the other person before we do our bit. The bible says while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Unconditional love often makes responsibilities to be abdicated. One thing is certain: nobody grows in an atmosphere of punishment and lack of mercy. If what you want is change, it has been proven that one of the best atmospheres to bring change is an atmosphere of love and understanding. People need to know that you have their interest at heart before they listen to you. Lack of understanding creates filters; when the filters get strong, they degenerate to bad construct where feelings are neglected. God does not deal with us with filters. *1 Corinthians 13* emphasizes on the power of love to remove filters. Expectations are not to define the expression of love. Everyone flourishes in an atmosphere of love, and not one of criticisms, threats, and of terms and conditions. Marriages are failing today because of terms and conditions. Marriages should not be on terms and conditions because God is the protector of marriage. Focusing on how your spouse can meet your needs can make you forget that there are some needs that only God can meet. We need to settle this in our hearts.
2. **The fear of having to submit** – the fear that you may be taken advantage of. Submission does not have to do with women alone; the Bible encourages us to submit to one another (*1 Peter 5:5*). Real humility is the willingness to stand back for someone to go forward. A covenant marriage requires mutual submission. There should be a leader in the home but there must be submission. When it comes to leadership, we often turn to the man, but a responsible man allows everyone to operate in their areas of expertise. When there is no submission in a marriage, it removes grace. An atmosphere of submission attracts God’s grace into a home. Submission is affirming and recognising your spouse’s role and place in marriage. In marriage, love and submission are acts of reverence and submission to God who created marriage. The covenant perspective of marriage can only be fully expressed by the Spirit of God (Romans 8:11).

Prayers

Lord God, give every home the spirit of love and submission to fully enjoy the benefits of covenant relationship. We receive grace and wisdom for us to experience marital bliss, in the name of Jesus. Amen.