CITYLIGHT
CHURCH

Citylight Marriage Seminar

March 6–7, 2026

SESSION ONE

Marriage: The Doing of God

"Most foundationally, marriage is the doing of God. And ultimately, marriage is the display of God." - *This Momentary Marriage*, John Piper

> *The first cosmos was created as the home of a young couple named Adam and Eve. The new cosmos will be created as the eternal home of the Son and his bride. It is not as though marriage is just one theme among others in the Bible. Instead, marriage is the wraparound concept for the entire Bible, within which the other themes find their places. And if the Bible is telling a story of married romance, no wonder that the demonic powers would forbid marriage (1 Tim. 4:1-5). Every happy marriage whispers their doom and proclaims Christ's triumph. - Marriage and the Mystery of the Gospel*, Ray Ortlund

> And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man…Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. (Genesis 2:22, 24)

> Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" (Genesis 3:1)

BIG IDEA: GOD DESIGNED MARRIAGE, IT'S VERY GOOD, BUT THE DEVIL ATTACKS IT

1. God's very good design
2. The Devil's attack

GOD'S VERY GOOD DESIGN

Piece One - One God, One Man, One Woman, One Mission

ONE TRUE GOD

Genesis 1:1-3 - In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. [2] The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. [3] And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

ONE MAN & ONE WOMAN

Genesis 1:27- So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

> *God does not mention the difference of say, height or hair color or temperament or gifting. The one identity marker emphasized at the beginning is maleness and femaleness.* - Kevin DeYoung

> *It turns out that the first thing that we should look for in a marriage is someone of the opposite sex.* - *Gospel Shaped Marriage*, Chad and Emily Van Dixhoorn

ONE MISSION

Genesis 1:28 - And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

> *It has three parts. The first is the divine blessing. The cultural mandate is not a burdensome rule, but an expression of God's goodwill to us. But there is an element of command in the blessing. Given the other elements of the mandate, God calls us to spread his blessing throughout the earth.*

The second and third parts are commands. One is to have children, grandchildren, and so on, so as to fill the entire earth with people. Of course, those people would glorify God. The cultural mandate does not anticipate the fall. So Adam and Eve would fill the earth with people who were eager to do the will of God, and who would therefore live in God's presence, under his blessing.

The second command is to subdue the earth, to have "dominion" over it. This means to bring out the potential of everything in the earth so that it will be of service to human beings as they bring glory to God. - Theologian John Frame

The creation mandate—filling the earth and subduing it—applies to both sexes, but asymmetrically. The man, endowed with greater biological strength, is fitted especially for tilling the soil and taming the garden, while the woman, possessing within her the capacity to cultivate new life, is fitted especially for filling the earth and tending to the communal aspects of the garden. - Kevin DeYoung

Piece Two - Husband & wife; different but fitting together

Genesis 2:18 - Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”

Genesis 2:20-22 - The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. <u>But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him</u>. [21] So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. [22] And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.

"A helper fit for him" is a delicately nuanced, two-sided statement about the man and the woman as originally created by God. On the one hand, the woman is the man's helper. But the word helper cannot imply inferiority, for God himself is our helper: "Behold, God is my helper; the Lord is the upholder of my life" (Ps. 54:4). Nor can the word helper suggest dependence, for man and woman are obviously interdependent (1 Cor. 11:11-12). But the word helper does cohere with the fact that God created the woman for the man (1 Cor. 11:9). Verse 18 literally says, "I will make for him a helper fit for him." <u>The woman was made to complement and support the man and to strengthen</u>

his exertions for God in this world. The man needed a companion like himself, and yet unlike himself, as the friend and ally he could absolutely depend on. - Ray Ortlund

1 Corinthians 11:8-9 - For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. [9] Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.

Here again we see the ordered complementarity of male and female. Another man could have helped Adam till the soil. Another man could have provided relational respite and energy for Adam. God could have gifted Adam a plow or a team of oxen or a fraternity of manly friends all of which would have been useful, even delightful. But none would have been a helper fit for the crucial task of producing and rearing children. If mankind is to have dominion on the earth, there must be a man to work the garden and a woman to be his helpmate. - Kevin DeYoung

Piece Three - Marriage; an entirely unique relationship

Genesis 2:23 - Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."

"Something was taken from Adam, in order that he might embrace, with greater benevolence, a part of himself…he obtained a faithful associate of life; for he now saw himself, who had before been imperfect, rendered complete in his wife." - John Calvin

"…not made out of his head to rule over him, not out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected,and near his heart to be beloved." - Matthew Henry

Genesis 2:24 - Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

In real terms, two selfish me's start learning to think like one unified us, building a new life together with one total everything: one story, one purpose, one reputation, one bed, one suffering, one budget, one family, and so forth…Marriage did not arise from historical forces. It came down by heavenly grace as a permanent good for mankind. God gave it, and God gives it. It was, and it is, his to define. And he did define it in Genesis 2:24 as ***one mortal life fully shared between one man and one woman.*** - Ray Ortlund

ONE BODY

Proverbs 5:18-19 - Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love.

ONE MISSION

ONE LIFETIME LONG

> *I, Matthew, take thee, Andrea, to be my wedded wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I pledge thee my faith.*
>
> *What makes divorce and remarriage so horrific in God's eyes is not merely that it involves covenant-breaking to the spouse, but that it involves misrepresenting Christ and his covenant. Christ will never leave his wife. Ever. There may be times of painful distance and tragic backsliding on our part. But Christ keeps his covenant forever. Marriage is a display of that!* - John Piper
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> *"Divorce is permitted by God when one is the victim of adultery or serious, observable sexual sin on the part of his or her spouse, persistent unwillingness to cohabitate by his or her spouse, or gross negligence on the part of his or her spouse of the marital duties of material and relational provision."* - Citylight Elders position paper

Piece Four - The joy of it all: naked and unashamed

Genesis 2:25 - And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

> *In the closing scene of original human innocence, the man and the woman - not the woman only - are naked, face-to-face in a relationship of complete belonging and total vulnerability, where they experience full acceptance with no shaming. Even so, a biblical marriage today offers the comfort of being known intimately by another and not embarrassed or ridiculed for any reason, but only welcomed and put at ease and embraced. Married couples still experience this aftertaste of Eden's perfect shalom in their gentle intimacy today.* - Ray Ortlund

THE DEVIL'S ATTACK

Genesis 3:4-5 - But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. [5] For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

False solution one: Covering

Genesis 3:7b - And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

False solution two: Hiding

Genesis 3:8 - And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

False solution three: Blame-shifting

Genesis 3:12-13 - The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." [13] Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

Genesis 3:16 - To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."

Genesis 3:15 - I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Married and engaged couples

- What is the mission of our marriage? (See Genesis 1:27-28). Is there anything in particular that we'd like to adjust to better fulfill this mission?
- What is the husband and wife's unique role in this mission? Does our life reflect these unique roles? Ask each other: what is one way I can make it easier and more joyful for you to fulfill your role in the mission?
- What are two ways that we can pursue greater oneness in our marriage?
- Is there anything else that God taught you from his word tonight that you'd like to apply?

Single women

- What was the original mission for which God created humanity; male and female? (See Genesis 1:27-28)
- What are some ways that singles can fulfill the creation mandate even if they never marry?
- What is the woman's unique role in this mission?
- Assuming that marriage is your desire, what are some ways that you'd like to seek the Lord to grow you into a woman who can be a helper fit for a husband?
- What are some implications of what you learned tonight for the kind of man that you will allow to pursue you for marriage?
- Is there anything else that God taught you from his word tonight that you'd like to apply?

Single men

- What was the original mission for which God created humanity; male and female? (See Genesis 1:27-28)
- What are some ways that singles can fulfill the creation mandate even if they never marry?
- What is the man's unique role in this mission?
- Assuming that marriage is your desire, what are some ways that you'd like to seek the Lord to grow you into a man who is ready to welcome a helper fit to complete his exertions for God in the world?
- What are some implications of what you learned tonight for the kind of woman that you will and will not pursue for marriage?
- Is there anything else that God taught you from his word tonight that you'd like to apply?