

1

Relating to Your Call The Ministry of Marriage



Introduction

Ministry can be defined as giving aid or service to another. Marriage is a ministry. Marriage involves the husband ministering to his wife, and the wife ministering to her husband. It involves them both together ministering to their children and their extended family. And marriage involves them both together ministering to their community.

This study is intended for those who are married or those intending to get married. Both men and women will benefit from understanding the path of giving within a marriage described in this study. It deals with the basic elements of giving that must exist between a man and his wife.

Union

Marriage is a blending of two individual lives into one union.

⁶ "But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female.'
⁷ 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife,⁸ and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one.

Mark 10:6-8

- Underline who the man is to leave when he becomes married.
- Circle the one with whom he is to unite.
- Underline what the two become in verse 8.
- The Greek word *proskillaoo*, translated "united" in verse 7, has the meaning of "to glue to" in the original. It implies a bonding that makes separation impossible without damaging the thing glued.

Leaving father and mother is essential in every marriage. We are obligated to honor our parents, but we are no longer under their control or supervision. Husband and wife are now united to each other, not to their parents.

The union of marriage is more than just a physical union. Having the same spiritual commitment is essential in a Christian marriage.

¹⁴ Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? ¹⁵ What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?

2 Corinthians 6:14-15

- Circle the ones with whom we are not to be "yoked".
- A yoke is a fitted frame to go over the heads of a pair of animals so that together they can pull an implement such as a plow.
- Each question asked has an obvious answer: "nothing".
- What conclusion can you draw from this verse about marrying someone of a different faith?

More Than Marinated

In a certain sense marriage can be compared with two different ways of food preparation.

Marinating consists of placing two dissimilar ingredients together in a container for a long period of time. Both ingredients have an effect on the other, but they retain their basic characteristics.

Marrying two materials in cooking involves the blending and beating of them so that they lose their individual characteristics and identity and become something uniquely different. They become so joined that it is impossible to separate them.

Are You Married to an Unbeliever?

Paul gives instruction to those who are married to non-Christians. Find his guidance in



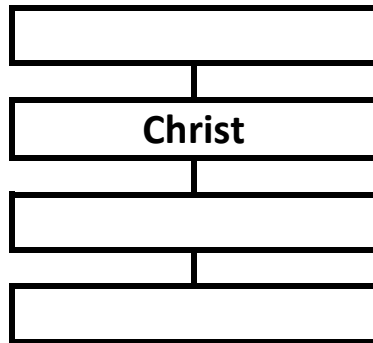
1 Corinthians 7:12-16

Order

God has established an order for guiding the interaction of people. He makes some leaders and some followers. His general pattern of organization is described below.

Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. 1 Corinthians 11:3

- Fill out the chart below, placing the one who is head over the one who is subordinate.



The same general order that God established for human interaction extends to the participants in a marriage. Both Husband and wife have specific roles and responsibilities that have been designed by God for their welfare.

Husband: Lover and Leader

Each husband is to minister to his wife following a particular pattern:

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church Ephesians 5:25-29

- Circle the word that describes how a husband should relate to his wife.
- Underline the one whose example he is to follow.
- In verse 28 underline the way a husband should love his wife.
- Circle the reason he should love his wife as his own body.

Man is the head of the woman not because he is smarter or wiser or better able to lead. Rather, man is a type of Christ and woman is a type of the Church. God has established the order to reinforce the truth that Christ is head of the Church.

Jesus' Love

Jesus' example of love is selfless and unconditional. He is willing to shed his blood so that his bride might have life. His ear is always open to her requests and He delights in her faithfulness.

Women have a tremendous need for tenderness, devotion and love. I have never heard one woman complain about her husband being too considerate.

Jack Mayhall

Consideration is an essential ingredient of love

Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

1 Peter 3:7

- Circle the way in which a husband is to live with his wife.
- Underline how your wife is to be treated.
- Draw a box around the reason a husband should treat his wife with consideration and respect.
- *The way a husband treats his wife has a direct effect on answered prayer.*

Wife: Helper and Follower

God's initial purpose for woman is revealed in the story of Adam and Eve.

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

²⁰ *...But for Adam no suitable helper was found. ²¹ So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. ²² Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.*

Genesis 2:18,20-22

- Underline God's concern about man being alone.
- Circle the purpose God had in mind in making woman.

Woman was not only designed to be a helper of her husband. She was also designed to be his follower.

²² *Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.*

Ephesians 5:22-24

- Circle the way the wife is to relate to her husband.
- Underline the one who is head of the wife.
- In verse 24, draw a box around the number of ways she is to submit.
- Underline the model of submission she is to follow in verse 24.

The act of submission is not an act of slavery or subjugation. It is an attitude of the heart that chooses to yield out of respect for the Lord. In fact, the act of submission shows respect for her husband as well as the Lord.

However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Ephesians 5:33

- Underline the husband's responsibility.
- Circle the wife's responsibility.
- *Notice that the wife is **not** commanded to love. She is commanded to respect her husband.*

How Good of a "Lover" Are You?

One sure way to find out how you are doing as a lover is to ask your wife to name the things you have done that show her you really care. No one knows better than she does how effective you are at communicating a loving concern.

Cultural change?

Many women resist the command to submit citing cultural and social change as their reason. But none of them suggest that the passage relating to their husband's obligation to love is culturally obsolete. Culture has changed, but the basic nature of men and women have not.

Some say, I'll submit **if** my husband shows me the love he is supposed to show. However, scripture does not offer that alternative. You are to submit whether he loves or not. And he is to love whether you submit or not.

But when he loves and she submits, there is a sweet fragrance in the relationship that makes it alive and refreshing every day.

Faithfulness

No other relationship on earth has the same covenant requirement as marriage. Two people make a promise to spend the rest of their lives together. Such being the case, faithfulness to one another is a primary ministry of marriage.

Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.

Hebrews 13:4

- Circle those who should honor the commitment made between a man and his wife.
- Underline the aspect of marriage that should be kept pure.
- Draw a box around those whom God will judge.

Sexual faithfulness is a particularly important aspect of marriage. Sexual intimacy between husband and wife is not only essential; it is required.

³ *The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband.* ⁴ *The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife.* ⁵ *Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.*

1 Corinthians 7:3-5

- Circle the thing that both husband and wife are to fulfill.
- *It is clear from the context of the passage the "marital duty" refers to sexual intimacy.*
- Underline to whom the wife's body belongs.
- Circle to whom the husband's body belongs.
- Draw a box around the command in verse 5.
- Underline the reason that sexual intimacy is necessary in verse 5.

It is sad to note that while every marriage starts with a promise of faithfulness, many end in divorce. Jesus provided one permissible reason for divorce:

⁸ *Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning."* ⁹ *I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery."*

Matthew 19:8-9

- Underline why Moses permitted divorce.
- Circle the condition Jesus allows as grounds for divorce.
- Draw a box around the result of leaving one woman and marrying another.
- *"Marital unfaithfulness" describes the sexual violation of the marriage promise of faithfulness.*



One Sexual Partner

The normal plan that God has for your sexual intimacy revolves around one and only one person. Prior to marriage we are instructed to abstain from sexual relationships. Once married we are bound to sexual intimacy with only one person: the one we marry.

Divorce is Forgivable

While God hates divorce, His forgiveness extends to those who cause divorce or those who are victims of divorce. Divorce is like any other sin. Confess it and seek to live the rest of your life in submission to God's guidance.

"I hate divorce"

The Lord God of Israel (Malachi 3:15)

Review

In the space below, write a brief summary of the important points from each section of this study.

Union in Marriage

Order in Marriage

The Husband Leader

The Wife Helper

Faithfulness

Application

What has God spoken to you about in this study?

What do you think your need is?

What is it that God wants you to do?

How are you going to check-up on yourself?

Don't Skip the Application

Applying God's Word to your life is the most important part of study.