

Christian Marriage: An Overview

God instituted marriage

It is God who brought Adam and Eve together (Gen.2:22). Adam and Eve were the first husband and wife (Gen.3:6). Thus, marriage is instituted by God.

Christ and the church

The Old Testament describes the relationship between God and Israel as that of a husband and wife (Jer.31:32). The Bible depicts Jesus Christ as the bridegroom (Mt.9:15) and the church as the bride (Eph.5:22-24). Thus Christian marriage is a picture of this relationship.

Covenant

Christian marriage is a covenant. In a contract, the party signing the contract strives to ensure their rights are protected and that they get their dues from the contract. The focus of a covenant is on what you can give rather than what you can get. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son Jesus Christ to die for our sins (Jn.3:16). The focus of Christian marriage is all about serving one another and together being of service to the community.

Sacrament

Christian marriage is a sacrament. The word sacrament is derived from the Latin word 'sacramentum' meaning 'to make sacred'. Marriage is a sacrament where the bridegroom and the bride are blessed to enter into holy matrimony. God is the centre of this relationship.

Permanent

Christian marriage is permanent – 'till death do us apart' (Mk.10:9). If there are irreconcilable differences between the husband and wife – learn to love the other person all the more. If God can love us when we are sinners, how much more are we obligated to love our spouse irrespective of all shortfalls!

Purity

Christian marriage calls for faithfulness in relation to one another. Sexual relations are restricted to 'each man with his own wife and each woman with her own husband' (1Cor.7:2). God expects the marriage bed to be kept pure (Heb.13:4).

Togetherness

Christian marriage is about togetherness. God instituted marriage to resolve the issue of loneliness (Gen.2:18). Marriage calls for absolute transparency between husband and wife. Husband and wife should uphold each other in prayer. It is a relationship of mutual submission out of reverence for Christ (Eph.2:21).

Excerpts from the Bible

Genesis 2:22-24

'Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh'.

Matthew 19:4-6

"Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one

separate.”

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

1 John 4:18

There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

Colossians 3:12-17

Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Ephesians 4:2-3

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

1 Corinthians 7:3-5

The husband should fulfil his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife. Do not deprive each other except perhaps 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.

Ephesians 5:21-33

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. 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. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. 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 their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— for we are members of his body. “For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. “This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Colossians 3:18-19

Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

Mark 10:1-12

Jesus then left that place and went into the region of Judea and across the Jordan. Again, crowds of people came to him, and as was his custom, he taught them. Some Pharisees came and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?” “What did Moses command you?” he replied. They said, “Moses

permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away.” “It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law,” Jesus replied. “But at the beginning of creation God ‘made them male and female.’ ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate.” When they were in the house again, the disciples asked Jesus about this. He answered, “Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery.”

Colossians 4:6

Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Ephesians 4:26

“In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry.

Hebrew 13:4-5

Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral. Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”