



a study on God, marriage, and family

LEAVING AND CLEAVING: MARRIAGE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

I. ROOTED IN CREATION

- Created in God's image
 - God assigns to Adam and Eve the mandate of representative rule
 - ❖ Exercising God's representative rule meant ruling the earth for God
 - ❖ This rule was shared jointly by the man and woman:
 - 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."
- The man's responsibility for the marriage
 - Man was created first (Genesis 2:15-18)
 - Woman was created for man
 - ❖ 1 Corinthians 11:9: "Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man."
 - ❖ 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."
 - Adam names the woman (Genesis 2:23, 3:20)
 - God confronts Adam, not Eve, although Eve sinned first.
 - ❖ Genesis 3:9: But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"
- The wife as a "suitable helper"
 - Provides companionship
 - Partners in helping "fill the earth and subdue it"
- Man and woman's equality
 - Both are created in God's image and are equal in personhood and significance.
 - However, according to the opening chapters of Genesis, man and woman are created with different roles (complementarianism).

II. CONSEQUENCES OF THE FALL

- Woman
 - Physical pain in childbearing
 - Harmony with man replaced with a pattern of struggle.

- Man
 - Trouble subduing the earth
 - ❖ Genesis 3:17(b)-18: "Cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field."
 - Must work for everything
 - ❖ Genesis 3:19: "By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread."
- Ultimate death
 - Potential immortality is replaced with physical death for all.

III. MARRIAGE IN THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL

- Marital roles in the Old Testament
 - Husband to wife:
 - 1) Love and cherish her
 - 2) Treat her with respect and dignity
 - 3) Bear primary responsibility for the family
 - 4) Provide food, clothing, and other necessities
 - Wife to husband (*in Ancient Israel*)
 - 1) Provide her husband with children (especially sons)
 - 2) Manage the household
 - 3) Provide companionship
- Israel's compromise of God's ideal for marriage
 - Polygamy
 - ❖ While the OT does not harshly condemn polygamy, and while a number of prominent OT figures practiced polygamy, there are Scriptures that clearly point out (Deut. 17:17, Lev. 18:18, 1 Kings 11:4) that it is a deviation from God's plan for marriage (one man and one woman).
 - Divorce
 - ❖ Marriage in both the OT and NT is designed by God to be permanent (more on divorce in week 10; e.g. when it is permissible, etc.)
 - Homosexuality (more on this topic in week nine)
 - Dilution of gender distinctions

WAYS IN WHICH ISRAEL COMPROMISED GOD'S IDEAL FOR MARRIAGE

BIBLICAL TERMINOLOGY	CREATION IDEAL	HISTORY OF ISRAEL
"a man...his wife"	Monogamy	Polygamy
"hold fast"	Fidelity	Divorce, Adultery
"a man...his wife... become one flesh"	Heterosexuality Complementarity	Homosexuality Gender roles diluted

IV. GLIMPSES OF THE IDEAL

- The excellent wife (Proverbs 31)...see pgs. 51-52

- Song of Solomon (beauty of sex)

V. INSIGHTS FROM OLD TESTAMENT MARRIAGES

- Adam and Eve
 - ❖ follow God's plan and instructions
- Abraham and Sarah
 - ❖ A wife should not follow her husband into sin
 - ❖ Don't try to remedy a situation with unbelief
- Isaac and Rebekah
 - ❖ An example of great love for one's wife
- Samson and Delilah
 - ❖ A reminder to guard one's heart against sin and seduction
- Ruth and Boaz
 - ❖ An example of a woman's trust in God in the midst of adverse circumstances.
- Ahab and Jezebel
 - ❖ A warning against domineering and unbiblical authority and persuasion in marriage.