

Lesson 1: The Origin of Men & Women (2 class periods)

Objectives (at the end of the class the student will be able to...)

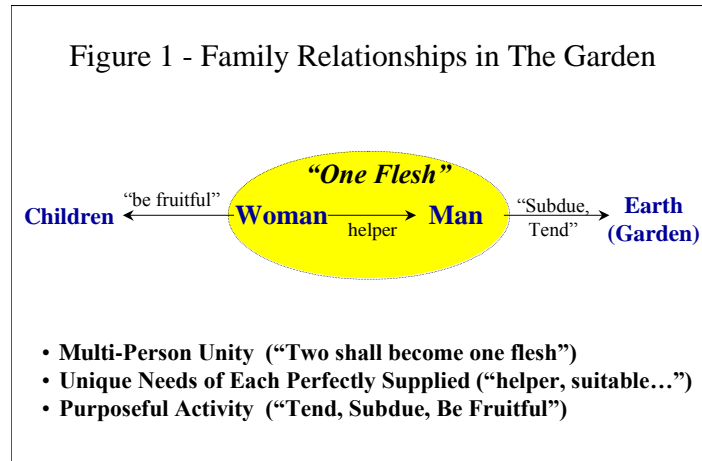
- Describe (and locate) the account of the origin of the man-woman relationship.
- Locate three New Testament references to the creation of men and women as a basis for differing roles in social relationships.
- Locate the three New Testament references to “One Flesh,” and the applications made.
- List three consequences of the Adam and Eve’s sin on all men and women.
- Describe how God’s laws for the family heal some of the consequences of the Fall.
- Describe at least three perversions of God’s Marriage Laws in the World.
- List at least three ways in which we can recreate the “Garden of Eden Family”.

A. Foundation Principles (Postulates)

1. ***Trust God’s plan.*** As creator of the family, God has the authority and wisdom to make laws and give guidance for the best possible relationships. God’s commands are best for man, whether he agrees or understands why or not. The Bible is inspired and inerrant, and its teaching take precedence over any other source.
2. ***Strive for the ideal.*** We should strive to make our families as close to the ideal as possible, rather than search for loopholes or exceptions to excuse our shortcomings.
3. ***We are responsible for our actions.*** We can do right, no matter the circumstances. With God’s help, we can change our behavior and our nature. We are accountable to God for our decisions.
4. ***Look first to the things of others.*** The key to successful and fulfilling relationships is putting away self and serving others.
5. ***Pleasing God is the Foundation.*** It is the purpose for life; it is the basis of all decisions; it is the motivation to do right; it is the source of strength in difficulties. There is no other.

B. The Creation account explains the basis for the man-woman relationship.

1. Why do you think God chose to reveal the events in Gen 1-3 to us?
2. What is special about the creation of man? (1:26)
3. The Creation account in Gen 1-3 provides a basis for role relationship between men and women. What applications are made in the New Testament, based on the creation events?
 - Gen 2:18,22 (I Cor 11:9,8)
 - Gen 2:22 (I Tim 2:13)
 - Gen 3:13 (I Tim 2:14)
 - Gen 2,3 (I Cor 14:34-36)
4. Note how the New Testament applies the teaching in Gen 2:24. What additional understanding of the term “One Flesh” can be derived from these passages?
 - a. Matt 19:5,6
 - b. Eph 5:28-31
 - c. I Cor 6:16

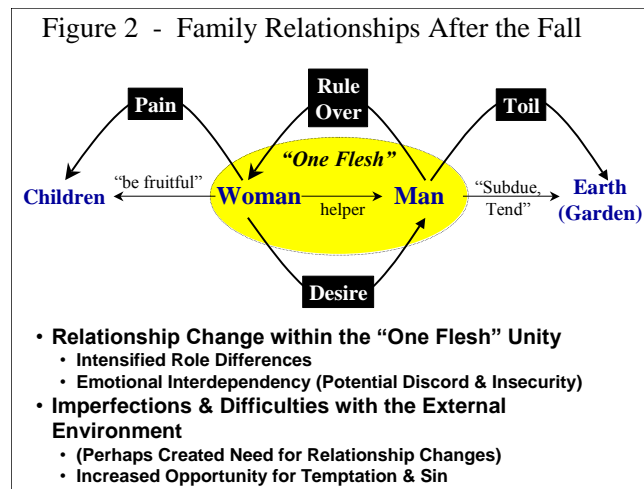


C. God created an ideal marriage relationship, which included role differences.

1. What two types of humans were created? (1:27) What other types of arrangements for procreation could have been made?
2. What role did humans have in the world? (1:26,28,29; 2:15) How were they different from animals? Were they given real choices? (see 2:16,17)
3. Why was woman created? (2:20-25) What is implied by the term, “helper”? Does it suggest mutual activity & purpose? (see Figure 1) Is there a difference of roles implied? (see I Tim 2:13; I Cor 11:9)
4. Discuss the implications of one flesh, based on Matt 19:5,6, Eph 5:28-31, and I Cor 6:16.
5. Describe family life in the Garden. Were physical, social, and spiritual needs met? List the advantages that Adam & Eve had in their marriage that we do not have today.
6. Is this ideal relationship possible for all people today?

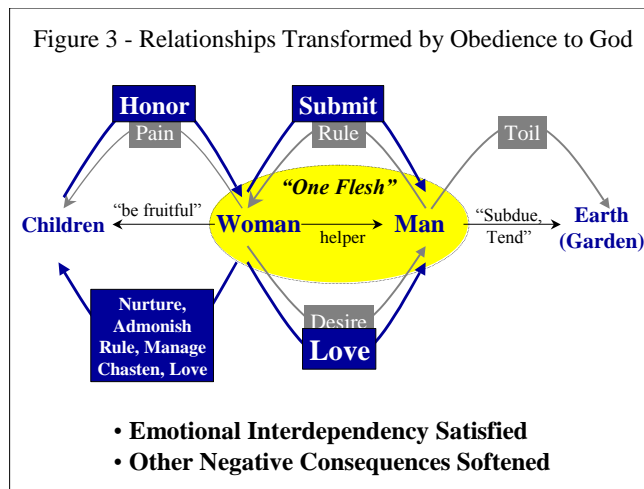
D. The Fall Intensified Role Differences & Increased Opportunities For Sin.

1. (Gen 3:1 -21) Were both Adam & Eve responsible for sin? (vs 12,13) Did they both share some responsibility for the sin of the other? Explain. Were they both punished?
2. List the consequences of sin for the woman and for the man. How were the family relationships altered as a result of their sin? (see Figure 2)
3. Is there more temptation (and therefore more sin) after the Fall? (e.g. Rom 5:12,19)
4. Is there a greater need for the man-woman relationship in a fallen world? Why? (See, for example, I Cor 7:2.) Is there a greater need for children to be protected by parents?
5. Is there greater likelihood of selfishness & abuse in relationships after the fall? Why?



E. God’s Laws for the Family Can Heal Some of the Consequences of the Fall.

1. Note how Jesus’ commands to wives (Eph 5:22), husbands (Eph 5:25), children (Eph 6:1,2), & parents (Eph 6:4), repair some of the consequences of the Fall. (see Figure 3)



2. Notice how love, submission, honor, nurturing, etc. provide for the specific needs of others in the family. Who is responsible to ensure that each member of the family fulfills his or her role?
3. If relationships in the Garden of Eden were ideal, ordained by God, and the basis of Jesus’ instructions, can we try to recreate these conditions? Is it possible?
4. Can each family member fulfill his or her role even if the others in a family do not? If followed, are these roles the most consistent with each member’s created “nature”?
5. List ways in which following God’s commands can “recreate” the Garden of Eden family. List the advantages they had, and how we might approximate those advantages today.
6. List specific improvements can you make to improve your family relationships.

F. The World Seeks to Solve Real Problems with Wrong Solutions

1. Do you agree that these are commonly held values in our culture?
 - Religion is a product of human nature, not the result of direct revelation from God. Christianity (& the Bible) is one of many man-made religions—all of which are equally valid (or invalid).
 - Right and wrong have no fixed definition for all people, cultures, or times.
 - There are no spiritual consequences for sin.
 - The best humans have to hope for is a “fulfilling” life before they die. (Be happy.)
 - Each person is free to make his own decisions and establish his own beliefs based on what is best for him. (...and should not be criticized or corrected for his decisions).
 - The “traditional” family is only one of many acceptable and potentially successful ways of providing happiness and fulfillment to individuals.

2. Describe the typical Hollywood Romance. Are the lovers usually attractive? What is the force that attracts them to each other? What is the typical sequence of events (for example, when do they typically begin a sexual relationship)? What is the goal of the relationship for each individual? Describe a typical “happy ending”?

3. Describe the typical Sitcom family? Is it “intact”? What are the spiritual values of the parents? What kind of leader is the father? What roles of authority are taken by the various family members? What is the level of morality of the children?

4. What motivates people to enter pre-marital sexual relationships? In what ways are these relationships justified?

5. Describe some of the problems created by sexual relationships outside of marriage. What solutions are proposed by those who would defend these relationships?

6. Give some of the most common reasons marriages break up—what do the couples say about themselves and about their spouses? What forces are at work to cause the problems that result in divorce?

Lesson 2: Singles Serving Christ (1 class period)

Objectives (at the end of the class the student will be able to...)

- Name three Bible examples of unmarried people who were faithful to God
- List two sins to which singles may be tempted to more than married Christians.
- List two advantages a single Christian has over unmarried Christians.
- List three examples of ways in which a single Christian may serve in unique ways, while at the same time filling their own needs for family connections.

A. Bible Examples of Faithful Unmarried People. Describe the type of service that these unmarried people performed. Did their unmarried status help or hinder that service?

1. *Anna*. Luke 2:36-38.
2. *Paul*. I Cor 9:5; I Cor 7:7-9.
3. *Timothy*. Acts 16:1-3; I Tim 4:12.
4. *“Widows Indeed”*. (I Tim 5:5,10)

B. Difficulties of Unmarried People

5. What are some difficulties that younger unmarried Christians face?
 - a. Specific temptations:
 - b. Discouragements & complications:
6. What are some difficulties that older singles (including widow(er)s and divorcees) face?
7. How can other Christians help with these difficulties? (see for example, Jas 1:27)

C. Specific Dangers (and Warnings) for Singles. Note that temptations to these sins are sometimes an attempt to fulfill a God-given longing or desire in an improper way.

7. Immorality & Worldliness

a. Fornication

- With a harlot (I Cor 6:13-20). Are there more temptations to “casual” sex today? Give examples? What is special about the sin of fornication (vs 18)?
- With other Christians (I Thes 4:3-8). What does Paul mean by “no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother”? How could this happen?

b. Homosexuality (Rom 1:26-27; I Cor 6:9-11). Is homosexuality condemned in these passages? Is there any reference to whether or not a person is “promiscuous,” that is, has multiple partners, in either passage? Note that these behaviors *are* a manifestation of the wrath of God (vs. 18).

What two types of homosexuals are mentioned in I Cor. 6:9? Discuss the forces in our society that encourage homosexuality. How can we help our brothers and sisters who are tempted in that direction?

c. Worldliness. Are there financial advantages (for some) of singleness? Can these financial resources (along with time and a lack of accountability) lead to worldliness?

8. Idleness—leading to other problems (I Tim 5:13). What were some of the destructive activities Paul warns that the younger, unmarried widows might get into?

What (about their situation) might lead an unmarried person into this behavior?

9. **Selfishness/Covetousness.** If the single person has the advantage that they are not burdened with the concern over the care of a wife or husband, around whom (other than God) might their activities center?

What would this look like in their life?

Is self-centeredness a danger even for older single Christians?

D. The Advantages of Singleness

6. Does Paul suggest there are advantages to being unmarried (I Cor 7:28, 32-35)? While there was a “present distress” (26) at the time of his writing, are there analogies today?
7. Does Jesus suggest that not marrying is a choice that some make for the kingdom’s sake (Matt 19:11,12)? What is the proper view of (earthly) marriage with the perspective of eternity (Matt 22:30; Gal 3:26,27; II Cor 11:2)?

Might an unmarried person’s hope be stronger than a married person’s, because of their situation in this life?

8. What advantages might a single, employed Christian have in serving God?
9. What advantages might an older, retired Christian have in his/her service to God?

List some specific activities that might be of use at Embury Hills.

E. Practical Suggestions for Singles Serving Christ.

7. What attitude was Timothy to have toward the men and women in the church in Ephesus (I Tim 5:1,2)? Does this suggest a way of providing companionship, help, and an object of love for the unmarried person?
8. List specific examples of service for which unmarried people are better suited than those living with immediate families.
9. List some practical suggestions for overcoming sexual temptation. Will it be enough simply to learn to “just say no”. (II Tim 2:22; Matt 5:27-30; I Cor 15:33)
10. List some practical steps for avoiding tempting others (I Tim 5:2; Eph 5:4; I Tim 2:9,10; Song of Solomon 8:8,9)

- 11. How can the sin of self-centeredness be avoided? (see Phil 2:3,4; Rom 15:1-3)**

Lesson 3: Forming a Family – Commitment & Relationship (1 class period)

Objectives (at the end of the class the student will be able to...)

- List three spiritual lessons that marriage illustrates in the Bible.
- List two characteristics of an ideal marriage.
- Describe two contrasting systems for making decisions in life, including the place of marriage and sexual relationships in each.
- List two ways an unmarried person improve the choices they will make in marriage.

A. Bible Teaching Using the Marriage Relationship. God uses marriage to teach us about the relationship between God and man. Match the passages with the principles taught.

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|--|----------------------------|
| _____ 1. Love, Sacrifice, Protection of Christ | a. Eph 5:28b-31; Rom 7:3,4 |
| _____ 2. Oneness, Faithfulness to Christ | b. Eph 5:24; I Cor 11:3 |
| _____ 3. Subjection, Obedience to Christ | c. Rev 21:2 |
| _____ 4. Beauty of the Christian Hope | d. Eph 5:23,25,26 |
| _____ 5. Importance of Purity of Christians | e. Eph 5:27; II Cor 11:1-3 |

B. The Ideal Marriage. Imagine the ideal couple about to enter marriage.

8. Are both the man and the woman virgins? (see II Cor 11:2; Dt 22:13-21)
9. Do they have the support of their families and community?
10. Are they mature and secure in their choices—including to marry each other?
11. Do they have common values and purposes in life? (See I Pet 3:7)

12. What choices can young people make to approach this ideal marriage?
13. What preparation can young people make to improve the quality of their marriage?
 - a. Before meeting a potential mate.
 - b. After meeting a potential mate (see, for example Titus 2:4,5)
14. What choices can diminish the chances of having the ideal marriage described above?
15. How can we assist young people in making these choices? (see, for example SoS 8:8-10)

C. The Foundations of Marriage. .

10. The Bible contrasts two value systems, as illustrated in these verses:
 - Rom 8:5-8, 12-14
 - Phil 3:18-20

11. Can the decision to marry—and whom to marry—be motivated by the mind of the flesh? How?

12. Consider Figure 4 below. The bottom blocks represent the most fundamental (and most stable) purposes in life, while the decisions and events above each block are made to enable or support the lower level goals (and are more likely to change or be replaced when they do not).

13. Which of the two value systems is a more stable basis for marriage—that is, resistant to emotional variations, illness, tragedy, aging. Which represents the mind of the Spirit?

14. Does romance (and sex as a part of romance) have a place in this value system?

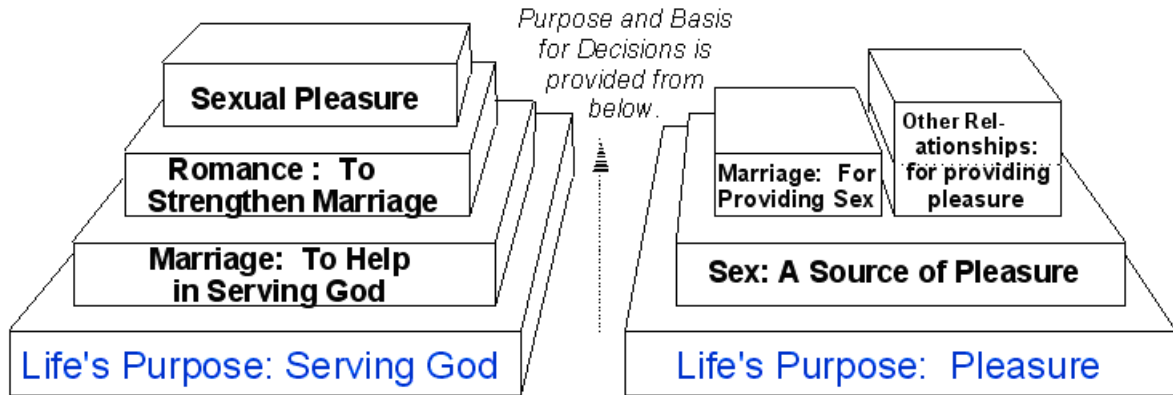


Figure 4 – Two Contrasting Value Systems Leading to Marriage

D. Choosing A Mate, And Preparing For Marriage. (see Gen 24:3,4; 26:34,35; Jud. 14:1-3)

10. How & when do people decide whom to marry in our time and culture?
 Has it always been this way? Is it this way all over the world?

11. When is the best time for determining the characteristics desired in a mate?

12. What are some of these characteristics, based on Figure 4 above?

13. Where would one find a wife or husband that meets these characteristics?

Is there going to be effort required? (e.g. travel, investigation, etc.)

14. How can one determine if a specific person meets these characteristics?

Lesson 4: Husband’s Responsibilities & Roles (2 class periods)

Objectives (at the end of the class the student will be able to...)

- List three characteristics commanded of men.
- List three patterns of leadership exemplified by Christ.
- List three difficult things a leader must do.
- Describe the basis of planning for a Christian home.

A. Male Character: the Basis of Leadership.

1. Note the activities, reputation, disposition, and inner character commanded of males (I Tim 2:8; Tit. 2:2, 6-8).
 -
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2. How is this character expressed in the home?
 - Eph 5:28
 - Col 3:19
 - I Pet 3:7
 - Col 3:21
 - Eph 6:4
 - I Tim 3:4,5
3. Is this our culture’s ideal “manly” character ?

B. Headship is Defined by Christ’s Example (Eph 5:22-33)

1. What is the nature of earthly leaders (Mat 20:25-28)?
2. How is the husband’s headship enforced? (Eph 5:22-33)
 - 22, 24,
 - 33
3. What is the pattern of Christ’s leadership?
 - 23
 - 25
 - 26
 - 27
 - 29
4. What is the motivation/goal? (I Pet 3:7)

B. Leadership is Tough Work

1. Consistent discipline (personal, financial, spiritual)
2. Protection/provision – implies: courage, skill, strength, wisdom, foresight, perseverance, sacrifice
3. Maintaining spiritual vision (knowledge, faith & hope in trial, right vs wrong judgment)
4. Problem solver: taking the initiative, first in confession & forgiveness, making sacrifices
5. Making (and sticking to) unpleasant decisions based on confidence in immutable values.
6. Nurturing for growth & admonishing for improvement (Eph 6:4)

I Timothy 2:8 – Therefore I desire that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting

Titus 2:2, 6-8 – ² that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience...

⁶ Likewise exhort the young men to be sober-minded, ⁷ in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, ⁸ sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.

Ephesians 5:22-33 - Wives submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.

²⁴Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

²⁸So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. ³⁰For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. ³¹”For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” ³²This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. ³³Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

I Peter 3:7 - Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

C. Leaders Set Direction & Take Initiative. (see I Pet 1:20)

1. Strategic *Planning*
 - Evaluate Spiritual Status of Family (knowledge, faith, influences...)
 - Evaluate Habits, Attitudes, and Implicit Values
 - Imagine 5 yrs, 10 yrs hence: Where will the family be in Spiritual growth?
 - What is missing? What must be done?
2. Near-term *Initiatives* (Tactical)
 - Daily, Weekly, Monthly Practices (including, for example, worship attendance)
 - [Your Example] & Specific Guidance/Standards for: Entertainment, Language, Behavior, Associations, Financial Practices, Use of Time, Integrity,
 - Expressions of both affection and direction (more habits to start).

E. Family Leadership led by the Spirit. (see Lesson 3, part C)

1. What is the foundation of the strategic planning?

Should the spiritual leader himself be led by the most important goals?

2. Consider the value system represented in Figure 5.
 - What is the most important goal? How is that expressed in the family?
 - What is the purpose for having a job?
 - What is the purpose for having a house?
 - What is the purpose for having children?
 - How would these purposes affect the kind of job, the size and location of a house, and the activities in which the family engages?

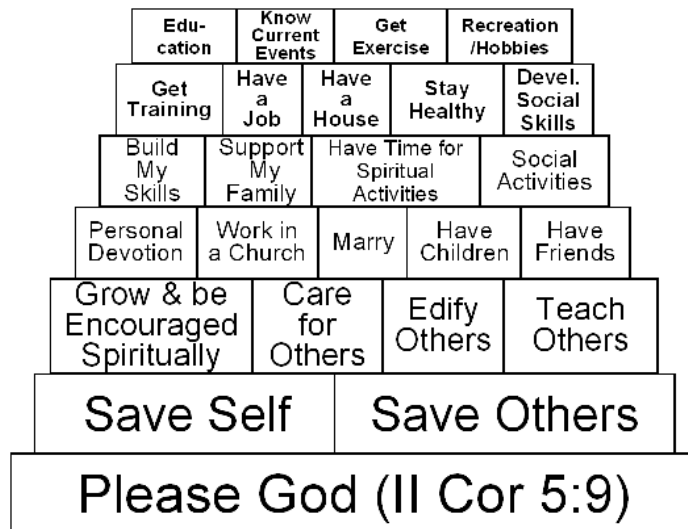


Figure 5 - Decisions Guided by the Mind of the Spirit