

## GOD'S INTENTION FOR MARRIAGE

The Pharisees, attempting to test Jesus, asked Him, *"Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?"* (Mark 10:2). After a brief discussion of how the Law of Moses dealt with the issue, Jesus ultimately directs the discussion back to God's original intention for marriage: *"But from the beginning of creation, God 'made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate"* (Mark 10:6-9).

Because of society's casual attitude toward marriage and commitment, its utter disdain for the proper context of human sexuality, and the human tendency to do what one desires instead of what is right, marriage has become a difficult issue. What is a positively simple concept in theory (one man and one woman committed to each other for life), has been transformed into a tangled web of complexity. What was intended for the good of humanity (*"It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him"* Gen. 2:18), has turned into the source of pain and suffering. What should be the bedrock of society, has become shifting sand that has shattered the foundation.

Jesus' response to the question is instructive to us. Instead of engaging in a debate about all the different possible scenarios regarding marriage and divorce, He simply went back to God's original intention for marriage. He states the positive in clear and simple terms. He teaches about the beauty of God creating them male and female and the beauty of the two becoming one flesh.

As *"the pillar and ground of the truth"* (1Tim. 3:15), we the church need to be loudly proclaiming God's plan for marriage and its benefits. We need to be teaching the gravity of the decision of choosing a lifelong partner and the gravity of the commitment involved. We need to be counseling those planning on getting married and mentoring those newly married. We need to be involved in each other's lives to the extent that we can help and encourage one another in our marriages.

Ultimately, marriage is a picture of the relationship between Christ and the church (Eph. 5:22-33, esp. v. 32). Are we doing all we can to see that our marriages reflect this reality?

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