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FAMILY ISSUES

Restoration of the Home

The first family fell into sin. When mankind disobeyed the clear command of God and fell into sin, five things happened:

- Man became a sinner, separating him from a holy God (*Psalm 51:5*).
- Man's mind became defiled (*Romans 8:5-8; Colossians 1:21; Titus 1:15*).
- Man became a slave to sin (*Romans 6:17*).
- Man became an enemy of God (*James 4:4*).
- Man became dead in trespasses and sins (*Ephesians 2:1-2*).

Mankind fell and lost touch with the divine purpose of the family

- The first family lost the image and character of God.
- The first family became separated from fellowship and relationship with God.
- The first family passed on their sinful nature to their offspring.
- The first family conceded their dominion over the earth and became slaves to sin.

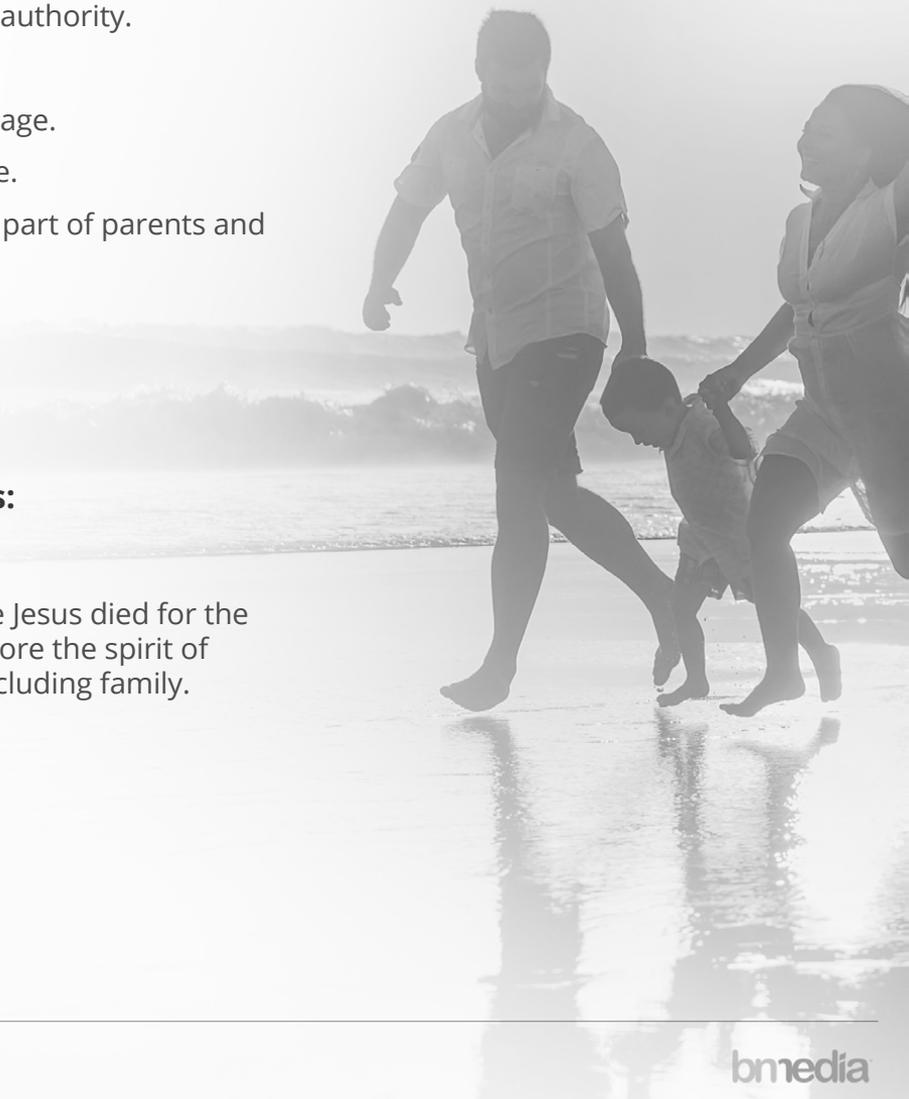


Sin had a major effect on family life. It put into effect a wide range of family problems that were not experienced from the beginning.

- Sin introduced disrespect for and rebellion against parental authority.
- Sin introduced hatred and envy among family members .
- Sin introduced improper and unprincipled relations in marriage.
- Sin introduced self-centeredness and dishonesty in marriage.
- Sin introduced a lack of respect and love for children on the part of parents and relatives.
- Sin introduced deception into the marital relationship.
- Sin introduced favoritism in the parenting process.
- Sin introduced unfaithfulness between spouses.

God's solution for the fallen condition of the family is:

- Restoration of the home (*Jeremiah 31:1; Malachi 4:5-6*)
- God's solution for man's problem is Calvary, the place where Jesus died for the sins of all people. Through the cross, not only does God restore the spirit of man, but His restoration touches every area of man's life, including family.



The Covenant of Marriage

God's first purpose for creating man and woman and joining them in marriage is to mirror His image on earth. The Hebrew word for "mirror" means to reflect God, to magnify, exalt and glorify Him.

Family is the foundation for society, and marriage is the foundation for the family. They are in harmony with each other; so as the marriage goes, so goes the family. The best thing that parents can do for their children is to have a God-pleasing marriage relationship.

What is marriage?

Marriage is the coming together of a man and a woman for the purpose of establishing a new home for the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose (*Genesis 2:24*):

Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

- This process involves a leaving of father and mother.
- The process involves a cleaving of one to the other.

Ultimately, marriage is a lifelong partnership built on a commitment to meet each other's needs and to fulfill God's purpose for our lives together.



Marriage is a Covenant

You ask, "Why?" It is because the Lord is the witness between you and the wife of your youth. You have been unfaithful to her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant. Has not the one God made you? You belong to him in body and spirit. And what does the one God seek? Godly offspring. So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful to the wife of your youth. (Malachi 2:14-15)

Wisdom will save you also from the adulterous woman, from the wayward woman with her seductive words, who has left the partner of her youth and ignored the covenant she made before God. Surely her house leads down to death and her paths to the spirits of the dead. (Proverbs 2:16-18)

A covenant is a formal, solemn and binding agreement or contract, usually under seal between two (or more) parties.

The word "covenant" infrequently heard in conversation, is quite commonly used in legal, social (marriage), religious and theological contexts.

The biblical words most often translated "covenant" appears about 280 times in the Old Testament and at least 33 times in the New Testament.



- We are living in an age where people do not fulfill their covenant commitments (*2 Timothy 3:4*)
 - People want out of leases and rental agreements.
 - People want relationships that cost them nothing.
 - People want ways out of their marriage commitments (e.g., prenuptial agreement).
- God Himself has entered covenants with man
 - Examples include covenants with Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and David.
- God has provided the pattern for entering all covenant relationships.

Most married couples started out wrong in establishing that initial relationship. Most of the time this has been due to a lack of understand of God's pattern of entering into a covenant relationship.

- An example of God's approach can be found in 1 Thessalonians 5:23
 - When God enters into covenant relationship with man, He has an approach that produces life.
 - God's order: Spirit > Soul > Body.
- Satan also has an approach that we must guard ourselves against. When Satan enters in into covenant relationship with man, he has an approach that produces death.
 - Satan's order: Body > Soul > Spirit.



Relationships that don't follow God's covenant pattern face problems including:

- Declining relationship
- Low level of communication
- Open to more serious moral attack
- Hindered development of true spiritual union

The solution: Repent and do what should have been done first.

- Husbands and wives must cultivate a "brother/sister" relationship in the Lord. We need to put a new foundation under our house.
- We must maintain peace between us (*James 5:9; 4:1; Romans 14:23*).
- We must always seek the best interest of the other (*Romans 12:10; Philippians 2:3*).
- We must look for ways of serving each other.



Communication in Marriage

Communication is the process by which one person passes on to another person his or her ideas and feelings. It comes from the word communion which involves “a sharing, a participation with and an impartation from one person to another.”

Strong communication is imperative in relationships. When we think of God’s model of establishing relationship, we learn that before a man and a woman are a husband and wife, they are brothers and sisters in Christ. This means that they are to be one in spirit.

Husbands and wives should be best friends. Friendship cannot occur in the truest sense without quality communication from both parties involved.



- The purpose of communication in marriage is:
 - To help facilitate a growing relationship between the two parties.
 - To contribute to the fellowship between the two parties.
 - To assist the couple in becoming one.
- Man's fall in the garden had some devastating effects on the communication process (*Genesis 3: 1-13*)
 - Man had a desire to hide and not communicate (*Genesis 3:8*)
 - Man developed the tendency to shift blame for his failures (*Genesis 3:12-13*)
 - Man developed a tendency to lie and be deceitful (*Genesis 3:10*)
 - Man now tried to conceal himself from his spouse.
 - Sin polluted man's ability to communicate in a positive and unifying way.

There are two main kinds of communication in every marriage. At any time we are communicating in one way or another:

- There is unifying conversation. This is communication that draws us closer together and builds the relationship. This is fostered by: positive praise, encouragement, honest sharing in love, respectful dialogue, trust, kindness, consideration and humility.
- There is divisive communication. This is communication that undermines or destroys the relationship. This is fed by: anger, bitterness, selfishness, criticism, dishonesty and pride.



Some of the things to avoid that can destroy or inhibit good communication:

- Don't go to bed angry
- Avoid communication destroyers. These include: crying, screaming, silent treatment, door slamming, name calling, nagging, ridicule, interrupting, overreacting, breaking confidentiality (talking to others about private matters)
- Don't make assumptions about the other person's motives or actions
- Do not put down concepts that are different than yours. Be open.
- Avoid all distractions when communicating.
- Don't continually return to subject matter that has already been discussed and agreed upon, especially when it did not go your way.
- Don't get impatient for immediate results. Be committed to the process.

There is healing for marriage because Jesus' death and resurrection have provided the way to heal the broken-hearted and transform the hard-hearted. It is only through an intimate relationship with Him that we can restore our marriage.

