

1  **Why I am staying married**

AND WHY YOU SHOULD STAY MARRIED TOO

2  **Marriage in Today's Culture**

A DISTORTED VIEW

3  **Marriage in today's culture**

- ▶ "Marriage is just a piece of paper."
- ▶ "Marriage is an archaic and oppressive institution."
- ▶ "Do you want to be single and lonely, or married and bored?" -- Chris Rock, comedian
- ▶ Many say living together before marriage improves your chance of making a good marriage choice.
- ▶ Comment on Yahoo forum: "I'm getting married next year because I love my fiancé. However, if things change, I won't hesitate to divorce him."

4  **New York Times**

- ▶ "A happy marriage is the 'me' marriage" – December 2010
- ▶ "... In modern relationships, people are looking for a partnership, and they want partners who make their lives more interesting... Help each of them attain valued goals." (Tara Parker Hope)

5  **Psychology Today (January 20120**

- ▶ "The Case against Marriage: Marriage Does More Harm Than Good"

6  **Psychology Today (January 20120**

- ▶ "As an alternative to marriage, serial relationships and casual encounters constantly create new and unexpected challenges calling on us to reach more deeply in order to navigate the demands of different experiences." (Stanley Siegel)
- ▶

7  **The world has a low view of marriage**

- ▶ There never has been a generation whose general view of marriage is high enough. The chasm between the biblical vision of marriage and the common human vision is now, and has always been, gargantuan. Some cultures in history respect the importance and the permanence of marriage more than others. Some, like our own, have such low, casual, take-it-or-leave-it attitudes toward marriage as to make the biblical vision seem ludicrous to most people.
  - ▶ *This Momentary Marriage* . Crossway. Kindle Edition.

8  **A biblical view of marriage**

A DIFFERENT VIEW

9  **Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

- ▶ Dietrich Bonhoeffer was engaged to be married to Maria von Wedemeyer when he was hanged at dawn on April 9, 1945, at the age of thirty-nine.
- ▶ As a young pastor in Germany, he had been opposed to Nazism and was finally arrested on April 5, 1943, for his involvement in a conspiracy to assassinate Adolf Hitler.
- ▶ So he never married. He skipped the shadow on the way to the Reality.
- ▶ Some are called to one kind of display of the worth of Christ, some to another. Martyrdom, not marriage, was his calling.
- ▶ *This Momentary Marriage*, by John Piper

10  **As the crown makes the king**

- ▶ The month after Bonhoeffer's imprisonment, and two years before his death, Bonhoeffer wrote from the military section of the prison at Tegel, Berlin, "A Wedding Sermon from a Prison Cell." His text was Ephesians 1:12: ". . . so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory."
- ▶ Marriage is more than your love for each other. . . . In your love you see only the heaven of your own happiness, but in marriage you are placed at a post of responsibility towards the world and mankind. Your love is your own private possession, but marriage is more than something personal—it is a status, and office. Just as it is the crown, and not merely the will to rule, that makes the king, so it is marriage, and not merely your love for each other, that joins you together in the sight of God and man. (Dietrich Bonhoeffer)

11  **Matthew 19:3-10**

*And Pharisees came up to him in order to test him and asked if it was permitted for a man to divorce his wife for any cause. And he answered and said, "Have you not read that the one who created them from the beginning made them male and female and said, 'On account of this a man will leave his father and his mother and will be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, man must not separate." They said to him, "Why then did Moses command us to give a document—a certificate of divorce—and to divorce her?" He said to them, "Moses, with reference to your hardness of heart, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not like this. Now I say to you that whoever divorces his wife, except on the basis of sexual immorality, and marries another commits adultery, and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery." The disciples said to him, "If this is the case of a man with his wife, it would be better not to marry!"*

12  **A radically different view**

- ▶ The disciples' response indicates that God's view of marriage is so different from ours, that the disciples cannot even imagine it being a good thing.
- ▶ Jesus answered them in Matthew 19:11 -- *But he said to them, "Not everyone can accept this saying but those to whom it has been given."*

13  **Biblical marriage is meant to be radical**

- ▶ If that was the case then—in the sober, Jewish world in which they lived—how much more will the magnificence of marriage in the mind of God seem unintelligible in a modern Western culture, where the main idol is self; and its main doctrine is autonomy; and its central act of worship is being entertained; and its three main shrines are the television, the Internet, and the cinema; and its most sacred genuflection is the uninhibited act of sexual intercourse.
- ▶ Such a culture will find the glory of marriage in the mind of Jesus virtually incomprehensible. Jesus would probably say to us today, when he had finished opening the mystery for us, the same thing he said in his own day: *"Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given. . . . Let the one who is able to receive this receive it"* (Matt. 19:11–12).
  - ▶ This Momentary Marriage . Crossway. Kindle Edition.

14  **John Piper**

- ▶ "The greatness and glory of marriage is beyond your ability to think or feel without divine revelation without the illuminating in awakening work of the Holy Spirit."

15  **The reality of marriage**

- ▶ Romance, sex, and childbearing are temporary gifts of God. They are not part of the next life. And

they are not guaranteed even for this life. They are one possible path along the narrow way to Paradise. Marriage passes through breathtaking heights and through swamps with choking vapors. It makes many things sweeter, and with it come bitter providences. (John Piper)

16  **If you're just beginning marriage**

▶ I join Dietrich Bonhoeffer in saying, "Welcome one another . . . for the glory of God." *That is God's word for your marriage. Thank him for it; thank him for leading you thus far; ask him to establish your marriage, to confirm it, sanctify it, and preserve it. So your marriage will be "for the praise of his glory."* Amen.

17  **Marriage is God's Design**

GENESIS 2:18-25

18  **The foundation: Marriage is God's invention**

▶ The Bible begins with a marriage of Adam and Eve. It ends with the marriage of Christ and the church.

▶ *And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him.* (Genesis 2:18, KJV 1900)

▶ *And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.* (Genesis 2:22, KJV 1900)

▶ *Therefore, shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.* (Genesis 2:24, KJV 1900)

▶

19  **Genesis 2:18-25**

*Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him.*

*So, the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.* (Genesis 2:18–25, ESV)

20  **What Jesus said about Genesis 2**

▶ *Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."* (Luke 24:44, ESV)

▶ *He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?"* (Matthew 19:4–5, ESV)

▶

▶

21  **Jesus attributed Moses' words to God**

▶ Even though Moses wrote the words of Genesis, Jesus says that the words of Genesis 2:24 are God's words!

- ▶ Therefore, God spoke marriage into existence. It is His design! Marriage is NOT a man-made institution.

22  **Mark 2:2-10**

*And they asked him if it was permitted for a man to divorce his wife, in order to test him. And he answered and said to them, "What did Moses command you?" So, they said, "Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away." But Jesus said to them, "He wrote this commandment for you because of your hardness of heart. But from the beginning of creation 'he made them male and female. Because of this a man will leave his father and mother and will be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh,' so that they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, man must not separate."*

23  **The "one-flesh" is a gift from God**

- ▶ Genesis 2:24 is God's word of institution for marriage.
- ▶ But just as it was God who took the woman from the flesh of man (Gen. 2:21), it is God who in each marriage ordains and performs a uniting called one flesh. Man does not create this. God does. And it is not in man's power to destroy.
  - ▶ This is implicit here in Genesis 2:24, but Jesus makes it explicit in Mark 10:8–9. He quotes Genesis 2:24, then adds a comment that explodes like thunder with the glory of marriage. "'The two shall become one flesh.'
  - ▶ So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."
  - ▶ "When a couple speaks their vows, it is not a man or a woman or a pastor or parent who is the main actor—the main doer. God is. God joins a husband and a wife into a one-flesh union. God does that." (John Piper)

24  **Tim Keller**

- ▶ "What God institutes, he also regulates. If God invented marriage, then those who enter it should make every effort to understand and submit to his purposes for it."

25  **Foundation: Marriage is God's doing**

- ▶ Marriage is God's doing because:
  - ▶ because it was his design in creation;
  - ▶ because He personally gave away the first bride in marriage;
  - ▶ because He spoke the design of marriage into existence: leave parents, hold fast to your wife, become one flesh;
  - ▶ and because this one-flesh union is established by God himself in each marriage.

26  **Marriage is a covenant**

- ▶ The words "hold fast to his wife" and "they shall become one flesh" point to something more permanent than serial marriages and occasional adultery. It is a sacred covenant rooted in the words "as long as we both shall live."
- ▶ Paul explains it more fully in Ephesians 5:31-32

27  **Ephesians 5:31-32**

- ▶ "Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. (Ephesians 5:31–32, ESV)
- ▶ In other words, marriage is patterned after Christ's covenant commitment to His church.

- ▶ Paul saw his ministry as gathering people into the bride.
- ▶ *For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.* (2 Corinthians 11:2, ESV)
- ▶ So, the highest meaning of marriage is to glorify God! Christ will never leave His wife!

28  **Marriage is designed to be temporary**

- ▶ It was meant to be permanent in this life, but we will not be married to our spouses in heaven.
- ▶ Mark 12:25 -- *For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.* (Mark 12:25, LEB)
- ▶ The blessings we receive in marriage – precious children, sexual intimacy, romance – all these are to be held loosely, for they are not part of our next life in heaven

29  **The ultimate purpose of marriage**

- ▶ Marriage is from God – He designed it
- ▶ Marriage is through God – He sustains the love in marriage by virtue of his grace and forgiveness
- ▶ Marriage is for the glory of God – We are to put his grace and forgiveness on display in our marriage
- ▶ Our marriages are to be permanent on earth to point to the permanence we have in heaven with Jesus Christ

30  **How is marriage used to glorify God?**

- ▶ *"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." (This mystery is great, but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.)* (Ephesians 5:31–32, LEB)
- ▶ "The highest meaning and the most ultimate purpose of marriage is to put the covenant relationship of Christ and His church on display." (John Piper)

31  **Make the main thing the main thing**

- ▶ "Marriage is not mainly about being or staying in love. It's mainly about telling the truth with our lives. It's about portraying something true about Jesus Christ and the way He relates to His people. It is about showing in real life the glory of the gospel." (John Piper)
- ▶ How does your marriage show the glory of the gospel to other people?

32  **The main thing (2)**

- ▶ "Staying married, therefore, is not mainly about staying in love. It is about keeping covenant. "Till death do us part" or "as long as we both shall live" is a sacred covenant promise – the same kind Jesus made with His bride when He died for her." (John Piper)

33  **Marriage meant to be permanent on earth**

- ▶ Jesus died for sinners. He forged a covenant in the white-hot heat of his suffering in our place.
- ▶ He made an imperfect bride his own with the price of his blood and covered her with the garments of his own righteousness.
- ▶ He said, *"I am with you . . . to the end of the age. . . . I will never leave you nor forsake you"* (Matt. 28:20; Heb. 13:5). Marriage is meant by God to put that gospel reality on display in the world. That is why we are married.
  - ▶ This Momentary Marriage . Crossway. Kindle Edition.

34  **The real tragedy of divorce**

- ▶ "Therefore, what makes divorce and remarriage so horrific in God's eyes is not merely that it involves covenant-breaking to the spouse, but that involves misrepresenting Christ and His covenant. Christ will never leave His wife. Ever." (John Piper)
  - ▶ *She who forsakes the partner of her youth and has forgotten the covenant of her God,* (Proverbs 2:17, LEB)
  - ▶ "To break faith with your spouse is to break faith with God at the same time." (Tim Keller)

35  **Summary**

- ▶ Men cannot understand the greatness of marriage without divine intervention
- ▶ Marriage is God's idea – it is from God and through God.
- ▶ There will not be human marriage in heaven – marriage is a momentary gift made to be permanent on earth.
- ▶ Marriage exist to reenact the gospel, to display the loving union between Christ and His bride which is the church.
- ▶ Staying married is not mainly about staying in love. It is about keeping covenant.