

Biblical Marriage Study

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Study #1

What the Bible says about male/female marriage relationships.

Let's get started at the beginning of God's creation of man and woman by looking at the first book of the Bible, Genesis. Someone read Genesis 2:20-25.

What are the facts stated in this Scripture?

Adam had no suitable helper

Woman was made from man's rib

Man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife.

The two will become one flesh

They were both naked and without shame.

Do all these facts relate to the marriage relationship?

Yes

Look again at the words of verses 24-25. What are the three actions to be taken by a couple and what do they mean?

Leave mother and father – leave them as the primary relation and make the spouse primary

Become united to or cling to or cleave to the wife – become closer and devoted to

Become one flesh – sexual intimacy as well as a single unit socially

How might the order in which these three actions are given be significant?

First comes the decision to make the potential spouse the absolute priority relationship

After making the decision, the effort is expended to spend time to better know, appreciate, and relate to each other. To become closer as friends and partners and to increase devotion and faithfulness to each other.

The first two provide the context for fuller, more satisfying, and purer sexual union. They should be well in place before proceeding with the latter.

In the King James version of the Bible the word "helpmate" is the key word of verse 20b. What word does your Bible translation use in place of "helpmate?"

What do these words imply about God's possible intention for the relationship between Adam and Eve?

Apparently God decided Adam needed a "suitable" helper.

What specifics might "helping" in a marriage entail?

Would someone please read Ephesians 5:15-21? What does "reverence for Christ" have to do with "submitting to one another?"

Jesus commanded us to love our neighbors as ourselves. Our first neighbor is our spouse.

In verse 15, who does it say should submit to whom?

Both are to submit to each other.

In the Greek language, the language used in the New Testament of our earliest Bibles, there were five words for different kinds of love. The word used here was “agape.” Can anyone define agape?

It is willed acceptance and serving the other person. Agape love is exercised or enacted as an act of the will. It is characterized by unselfishly accepting the other person as an act of will and striving to determine the other person’s needs and meeting/fulfilling those needs, i.e. serving the other person. It starts as a volitional act of the mind, and is often most importantly applied in response to a negative thought or feeling about or toward the other person. It is the required base of the right spiritual relationship between two Christians married to each other.

What would be the probable effect of a husband and wife practicing agape toward each other?

They would eliminate many of the “castle walls” of defense that exist between them. These walls are created by internal responses to our spouses, pressures of expectations, or demands which we refuse to conform to.

What might others observe in a couple who submitted to one another and practiced agape in their marriage relationship?

Real peace, unity, and empathetic acceptance of each other.

What does submitting involve?

Being committed. Going out of one’s way to determine the other person’s needs and taking steps to meet those needs. Considering the other person’s needs as rightfully superior to one’s own.

How might a husband submit to his wife?

By going out of his way to meet her needs even though it is not his “natural” way. Often, this includes spending time with her and communicating deeply and personally with her.

How might a wife submit to her husband?

By meeting his needs even though she does not understand why his needs are so different from her own.

Do you see any changes that need to take place to apply these scriptural admonitions to your own life?

Let’s focus on dealing with one trait of our spouse that has previously frustrated us. How do you suppose one would operationally accomplish an acceptance of this trait in the spouse?

By the practice of agape. The result often is that the person on the receiving end of agape has the freedom to change. The important factor is that we are willing and open to change as the Lord gives us direction in the Bible and in other ways.

Someone read Romans 12:2. This verse describes a process to effect change in a person's life. What is the key phrase here?

"Be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

How might you "renew" your mind in a particular way when dealing with one aspect of accepting your spouse?

In response to the very first negative thought or feeling, pray and ask God to empower you...then, by an act of your will, choose to accept this trait in your spouse. An additional beneficial step might be to add a request that God would bless your spouse with the feeling of your acceptance. The other person may never change or they may feel the freedom to change by the release of pressure to change. Our expectations or pressures to change often contribute to the other person's development of a strong defense system against us.

Would anyone like to share how you now see "submitting to one another" applying to your life today?