



**A Spiritual Encouragement Message
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The Importance of Marriage

By Oscar Velazquez

As a secular tradition, Valentine's Day is now an annual observation in which most of the world celebrates romantic love and friendship. However, this pandemic has led couples to experience an extra level of stress in different ways, whether is the loss of a job, or the lack of childcare, or the unaccustomed work from home that can be uncomfortable for some, or even the not knowing how to spend more time with each other.

Even though God can care less about worldly traditions, I think this is a good time to remind us about the importance of marriage in the sight of God.

The importance of marriage can easily be observed in the role that God had given it from beginning to end in His Scriptures.

The Creator sealed His creation and began humanity with the union of a couple. "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'" (Genesis 1:27-28). Even the animals He created in couples.

When sin contaminated the earth, God washed it away with the flood and began again with four couples, to fill the four corners of the world, sort of speak. "And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him went into the ark to escape the waters of the flood. Of clean animals, and of animals that are not clean, and of birds, and of everything that creeps on the ground, two and two, male and female, went into the ark with Noah, as God had commanded Noah." (Genesis 7:7-9).

When sin contaminated the earth for the second time, God started the family of the faith with a couple again, to bless many nations through them. "And God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you

shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her." Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, "Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?" (Genesis 17:15-17).

Jesus when starting His ministry showed His glory in a wedding feast (John 2:1-11).

Two of the most famous parables of Jesus illustrate with a marriage, the necessity to be completely ready for when Jesus comes back for us (Matthew 22:1-14, Matthew 25:1-13).

The prophets and the apostles used marriage to reveal the relationship between God and His people and Christ and His church (Isaiah 54:5, 62:5, Ephesians 5:21-33).

In the Bible, the story of God and men starts with a marriage and it ends with a marriage (Revelation 21:1-2).

The Torah reveals the way God created us. "The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him" (Genesis 2:15-18 ESV). Alone even when God was there with him? Our relationship with God is essential to exist and to live, but He created us to be complete and fulfill our purpose in our marriage. God made a helper fit for the man. Equal to him, not inferior, you see, God is also our helper (Psalms 30:10 and 54:4).

First, God let Adam figure out by himself that he needed an equal partner of the opposite sex. "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" (Genesis 2:19-20 ESV). Adam could say he literally had a wild bachelor party, he partied like a beast.

When God created man, He created two in one. Genesis 1:26-27, Genesis 2:21-23, Genesis 5:1-2.

God then separated them through a surgery and commanded them to become one again. Separation is not natural, God is one. If you have two drops of water on a table, what separates them? The space. How do you make them one? Remove the space between them. That is similar to what God did. "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" (Genesis 2:21-23 ESV). Reminds me of when Jesus's side was pierced at the cross and after His death, burial and resurrection His bride, the church, came to exist.

This at last is a part of me, Adam said. She was taken from the rib, not two ribs but one was enough. Not from his foot, not from his head, but from his side so they both know her place to live is side by side. She was made from his flesh and bone, so she feels incomplete without him, but she will never feel like she is nothing. She does not understand when he treats her like she is nothing, because she was taken from a created human being and not from dust. She completes the creation and makes the fructification and multiplication possible. Remember, the man is the one that was created from the dust of the earth (Genesis 3:19), so it's so easy to make him feel like nothing. His self-esteem is vulnerable and that is why he is always comparing himself to others, measuring up with others in all his conversations and behavior. The man's egocentrism is understood due to his unawareness of his emotional need to mean something. Criticism bothers him, it affects him because it unconsciously reminds him that he is nothing but dust.

"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 2:24-25 ESV). We cannot become one with anything else, not even with our parents. To become one flesh involves both and to accomplish that we need to be generous. We need to be generous with our love, time, things, words and space.

They were not ashamed because they were complete and without sin.

I hope and pray that these basic Torah explanations will help you understand the importance of marriage and that they will bless your relationship and will help you in your process of becoming one.