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Marriage: Lasting Life of Love

Gen 29: 1-20 - Psalm 128 - Heb 13:1-6 - Matt 19: 3-9

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'So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.' - Bible



The word 'marriage' derives from Middle English mariage, which first appears in 1250–1300 CE. This, in turn, is derived from Old French, marier (to marry), and ultimately Latin, marītāre, meaning to provide with a husband or wife and marītāri meaning to get married. The Bible speaks of marriage as a "covenant" (Mal 2:14)(Prov 2:17).

A foundational belief of the Church is that the husband and wife are created equally and are ordained of God to 'become one', a biblical principle first ordained by God in Genesis 2:24, reaffirmed by Jesus in Matthew 19:4-6 and Mark 10:6-8, and by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 5:30-32. Marriage is the replica of the relationship between God and man (Jer. 3; Ez. 16; Hos. 1-3) and between Christ and the church (Eph. 5:22, 23). The apostle Paul taught marriage should be respectable to all.

A lasting life of love is obtained through marriage in family life. Ancient Greek has four distinct words for love: agápe - unconditional love, éros - romantic love, philía - friend bond, and storgē - empathy bond. Agape is used by Christians to express the unconditional love of God for his children. This type of love was further explained by Thomas Aquinas as 'to will the good of another.'

Think of Paul's great hymn to love: 'Love - agape - is patient and kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. ... Love never ends.' 1 Corinthians is one of many definitional sources for the word agape when used to refer to divine love. Introducing his homage to love in 1 Cor 12:31, Paul describes agape as 'a more excellent way'. The word agape received a broader usage under later Christian writers as the word that specifically denoted Christian love or charity (1 Cor 13:1–8), or even God himself. Christ said, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.'

Unconditional Love is the pulse of the marriage covenant inspired into the human spirit! Love is the necessary tie proceeding from the realities of things through divine creation!

The Bible says that the family (*bayit* in Hebrew) has been established by God. God who found that it is not good for man to be alone instituted the family by making him part of that and giving a marriage treaty. Lasting love is the most important feature that enriches the marriage life of a family. The Psalm 128 tells in detail the blessings of the man who fears and walks in His ways.

#Lasting Life of Love: Jacob and Rachel (Gen. 29:20).
Love is not the means to anything but the alpha and omega, an end in itself. Jacob's love towards Rachel was a richer love, a deeper love, a more spiritual love. It certainly was a more impressive love. A strong companionship.

#Lasting Life of Love: Matt. 19:3-9; Gen. 2:24, 25.
Through marriage two persons become 'one flesh'. God joined the two into one. The Bible uses the term "one flesh" 5 times: (Gen 2:24)(Mt 19:5-6)(Mk 10:8)(1 Cor 6:16)(Eph 5:31). It is first used to describe the relationship between Adam and Eve in (Gen 2:24) The word "cleave" comes from the Hebrew word "*dabaq*" which is primarily the noun for "glue." In other words, when a man and woman marry, they become "glued" to each other. "one flesh" covenant must not be broken by divorce (Mal 2.16). Love is a commitment that a husband and wife need the most. They need to know a love they can depend on, a love that says, 'I will be with you through it all (problems, in victories, in health issues, in dreams and plans, in possessions and finances, and more) I love you. And I will love you even when you may not be all that lovable, for sometimes I'm not very lovable either. You can count on me - always.'

#Lasting Life of Love: Heb. 13:1-6; Eph. 5:21-32.
'Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure,' Paul makes a clear call for the honor and sanctity of covenant relationship. Jesus spoke concerning marriage,

> 'He who created them from the beginning 'made them male and female' (Gen. 1:27), and said, 'For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh' (Gen. 2:24). Consequently, they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate' (Matt. 19:4-6).

The covenant union of one man and one woman (the only form of marriage union the Bible allows) is honorable and to be respected. Marriage is to be regarded as a precious (Greek word *timios* – cf. I Pet. 1:19; Rev. 18:12,16,21) treasure, the highest and most glorious relationship between persons here on earth, and likened by analogy to the intimacy of union between Christ and the Christian (Eph. 5:23-33). Such a marriage relationship should be honorable "in all," states Paul, which can be interpreted as "in all respects," or "in all persons" or "among everyone," all of which are legitimate.

Finally, the sexual expression of husband and wife in ***grahasthashramam*** should be only in accord with God's creative intent.

Violating God's character of holiness, and failing to be receptive in faith to God's character of fidelity and purity will have grave consequences on lasting relationship of love. When believers are receptive to Christ's manifestation of His character of love and purity and fidelity in their marriages, they will not defile the beauty of God-ordained relationship in sexual immorality and adultery, and God's judgment will be, 'Well done, good and faithful servant' (Matt. 25:21,23).

Especially as the society seeks to redefine what marriage and love is today. It is IMPERATIVE that Christians set an example, and stand strong on the Biblical teaching of "one flesh" between a man and woman in marriage.