

## Divine Obsession and Human Commission

### Introduction:

Marriage. What a big subject. I suppose there is nothing more common and yet more misunderstood than marriage. The young look forward to it and the old look back upon it. For both and for all it serves as a point of reference for nearly everything important currently and throughout their lifetime. In success or failure, pain or pleasure, and in dreams that “coulda been”, “woulda been” and “shoulda been if only...” are like indelible markers along countless forks in the road.

Never more true than in thoughts of marriage, “Hope springs eternal”, the saying goes, but high hopes do not great success guarantee. It takes little to stir up hope. It takes much to acquire in good measure that for which we hope. According to current statistics in this country, hope regarding a mate is often dashed. After years of dreaming, planning and “being sure”, for the typical couple there is a fifty per cent chance, a mere flip-of-the-coin odds, that the happy dreamers coming down the aisle will part ways sometime in the future. Passion and hope may propel us, but that force is equaled only by the pain that almost inevitably shows up “too late” to warn us and to save us. Is there a way for us to escape the odds and walk in certainty?

Some give up the first day of marriage and some give up after several decades. Of the fifty per cent remaining, a small number seem to be actually happy with their marriage. One survey to which women recently responded indicated that only one in ten wives even wanted to see their spouse again “in heaven”. Christians, in one survey I read, measured a higher rate of divorce than others in the general population.

How can something so important as one of the main driving forces within us be so difficult to handle? Is there assurance your marriage is “going to work”? Are you bound to become “just another number” in a survey? Is there something else, something more than this?

Before looking into the direction and purpose of this study, let’s consider a few more things. In the natural view of “selecting a mate”, centered on biological and psychological behavior, marriage is the result of hormones, natural attraction and passion. But, if this is the basis of union, the same passion that takes us into marriage with feelings of lustful love may take us out with passionate feelings of betrayal, misunderstanding, disrespect and anger.

So, we search on. Book stores called “Christian” and secular alike, are crowded with books on marriage, on being a wife, on being a husband, on being a parent. Books spill over the shelves with surveys, checklists to help “fix” each other in marital discord, case histories, counselor techniques and guidelines, case studies, cultural and sociological affects on marriage, analysis of needs in a relationship, how to listen and how to express needs and concerns. Many newspapers typically have several columnists who write about marriage problems, girl problems, boy problems, family and extended family problems. Undoubtedly, many of these books and endeavors have on some level been helpful to many. Nevertheless, statistics stare us down, and many among us have suffered much even after giving to their marriages “everything they have”. Is there not another dimension for which we might seek? I believe there is.

No matter what the subject is, wisdom would instruct us to begin with God. Never is this more important and never is this less realized than in the matter of marriage. Such a thought seems to go counter to every thing we have learned and feel. Even when dealt with by traditional “Christian” means, it is easy to spend much time in counseling, load our shelves with books, and in the end go home alone, full of hurt, feeling hopeless and at last giving in to inevitable misery or outright failure. What then, should we do? How can we deal with this matter?

Marriage. We have talked thus far about “our” marriages, so enough of the analysis. Let’s look into the Lord’s Word. Let’s see what is in His heart. *Let’s bring Him into our marriages instead of just bringing our marriages to Him. There is a difference.* Let’s step back and start with God; not with our problems, not religion, not with something about God, but God.

We may know Bible verses that tell husbands to love and wives to submit, and that fathers shouldn’t make their children angry. But, let’s look further, not from the view of our need but from His need. Yes, God has a need. He has a need not in a sense of being weak, but in the sense He has a plan and has made Himself wonderfully vulnerable to us, His redeemed, created ones, we who have believed in Him. He has a need, out of His strength, that we respond to His romantic design for us, that we with Him will share, will co-habit His fulfilled purpose.

His need is precious, in that He has invested a living hope in us who believe, that we will respond to Him until we are so taken with Him that we match Him in life and nature. The marriage feast in Revelation nineteen is dependent upon the faithfulness of His redeemed, obedient lovers and of His love-relationship with them. He is waiting, waiting, waiting until the Bride has made herself ready. *He is ready, it is the Bride that needs to be purified and prepared.*

The Bible talks about God being engaged to His beloved, but unfaithful Israel. He also refers to Himself as their Husband, although in a distant sense. The New Testament continues and develops this revelation of His passionate love for His people. In this we see His divine obsession as a golden thread throughout the written Word that we hold in our hands.

Even if we “see” something about God’s romantic design for His Son throughout the Bible, what does that have to do with you and me? We know of the God-given human commission to “be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth”, but what does the coming wedding feast of the Lord as the Bridegroom in the future have to do with my marriage now? In the midst of busy lives and many challenging events, what do my thoughts or experience about marriage have to do with that?

My brothers and sisters, as His believers, as His receivers and lovers, it does make a difference to Him for eternity how we live today, because our living today affects the state of preparation of His holy and pure Bride. It certainly matters to us also, for our reward and function in the eternal kingdom directly correspond to the here and now and will be determined at the believers’ judgment. Our temporary living today is for our living in eternity in that day.

Still, what does this biblical truth have to do with your marital state? We need to grasp the idea our family life is for the church, His Bride. It is a great opportunity to see our family life as a laboratory for practicing divine principles and practical truths together in our homes. Such a practice is critical in realizing the importance, purpose and meaning of our marriages today.

Our homes are a great resource of experiences by which we can enrich the church, which is His body, the coming Bride. The Bride of Christ is therefore composed of enriched believers in their daily walk. In no other place is this so practical, so necessary and so parallel to the Lord’s coming marriage feast as in the experience of Christ in our own marriages and home life.

In this first study, we will look into these two marriages. May the vision and inspiration in His Word by His Spirit lift us into a place where we have eyes that can see something that will change us and will change our view and pathway forever. May the Lord afford us each and all the grace to enjoy what is in His heart. Such enjoyment will minister to each and to all; yes, to all, whether single, single again, widowed, engaged or married and married with children and extended family. His flowing grace, like water, will minister life and refreshment to any open place. He is the water, let’s exercise and encourage each other often to stay open to His flowing.

## Study guide: “Divine Obsession And Human Commission”

The following study section covers some significant verses on the subject of the two basic Scriptural matrimonies, that of our dear Lord’s forthcoming marriage feast of the Lamb, and that of the human population commissioned by the Lord to multiply and fill the earth. Let us be deeply mindful of these two aspects of the same thing.

What do I mean? The Lord’s Bride is composed of the divine Son become flesh, plus men of flesh among the general population who have believed in Christ and have received His redemptive, imparted, sanctifying, divine life. It is the mingling of His divine life and nature in and with the spirit and daily life of the believers that will compose the holy Bride of Christ, who will in her perfected state be without either spot (soiled, defilement, sin) or wrinkle (age due to the sting of death). This is a fantastic revelation in the Word of God, that we can learn to practice taking Him as our life in our daily chores and circumstances. It is through hearts yielded to an unconditional love relationship with Him that He is preparing the willing and obedient members of His body to be in such a condition for His coming. It will be in such a time and place the wedding feast will celebrate the divine consummation deposited into and expressed through humanity on the earth.

Our marriages and our homes, are but practice centers, laboratories to experience divine truths and divine principles together in our humanity as a readiness preparation for the age to come. I hope and pray these thoughts and these following verses may enlighten us and enable us to see marriage from our Lord’s point of view in the Bible. May we see what He saw and provided on our behalf, and enter into it; today, and in the days to come.

### I. The divine obsession, finding a Bride for the Father’s son

#### A. A redeeming Son as a Bridegroom

1. Gen. 3:21-4:5 ...did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them... and Abel was a feeder of sheep...and Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock...and the Lord God looked upon Abel and his offering...but Cain...
2. I Peter 1:18-21 ...ye...were redeemed...with the precious blood of Christ as of a Lamb *without blemish and without spot*: Who...was foreordained before the foundation of the world...
3. Ephesians 1:4-7 ...He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world...holy...without blame before Him in love...predestinated us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself...He...made us accepted in the Beloved in whom we have redemption through His blood...
4. Rev. 13:8 ...names in the book of life of the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world...
5. Rev. 19:7-9 Let us rejoice and be exceedingly glad and give glory to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready... she...arrayed in fine line, bright and pure...blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb...
6. Rev. 22:3-4 ...the throne of God and of the Lamb...and they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads...

## B. A matching Bride for His Son

1. Gen. 2:22 ...He builded a woman and brought her unto the man...(Adam) said this is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh...
2. Matt. 9:15 ...Jesus said...the days will come when the Bridegroom shall be taken from them, and they shall fast...
3. John 3:29 ...he that hath the bride is the bridegroom...
4. Ephesians 5:21-33 ...as the church...unto Christ, so...the wives...to their own husbands...Christ...loved the church and gave himself for her...(to) sanctify and purify her...to present to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing...holy...without blemish...we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones...two shall be one flesh...a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church...
5. Rev. 19:7-9 ...for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready...she...(is) arrayed in fine line, bright and pure...blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb...

## C. God's people as His beloved, and He their husband

1. Jerem. 31:31-34 ...I was an Husband unto them...I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people...all shall know me...for I will forgive...and I will remember their sin no more.
2. Is. 54:5-10 ...for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth...and thy widowhood...For thy Maker is thine Husband; the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called. For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth...
3. Hosea 2:7, 19-20 ...and I (Israel) will return to my first Husband...and I (God) will betroth thee...in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord...and I will sow her unto Me in the earth...My people, and they shall say *Thou art my God*...forsook for awhile, Moses, Israel, I will never leave nor forsake you...
4. Song of Songs 2:3, 4, 16 ...I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love...my beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies...4:9-12, 15...Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes...how fair is thy love...how much better is thy love than wine!...a garden enclosed...a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams...

D. Bible women as types of the Bride, the Church

1. Gen. 2:18-25; 5:2; Eve, presented as Adam's spotless, sinless bride
2. Gen. 24:58-67 Rebecca, presented to the bridegroom
3. Gen. 41:45, 50; 46:20; Asenath, chosen from among the Gentiles
4. Ex. 2:21; 4:25; 18:2; Zipporah, passing through the wilderness
5. Josh. 15:16-20; I Chron. 2:42-55 Achsah, received her inheritance in the land
6. Ruth 1-4; altogether dependent upon her kinsman redeemer
7. I Samuel 25; Abigail, militant for her lord

II. The human commission, providing offspring, "raw material" who may be gained for the Bride

A. A couple in God's image and with His authority for the earth

1. Gen. 1:25-28 ...let Us make man in Our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion...over all the earth...so God created man in His own image...male and female created He them...and God said, be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth, and conquer it...
2. Gen. 12:3; 13:16; 17:20-22; 21:12 ...Abram (with Sarai)...in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed...and I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth...in Isaac shall thy seed be called...(and Abram with Hagar)...Ishmael... I have blessed him and will make him fruitful...multiply him exceedingly...a great nation...
3. Ruth 4:11-12 The Lord make the woman (Ruth) that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which did build the house of Israel...
4. Matthew 1:1-17; Luke 3:23-38 ...begat...begat...begat

B. The relationship: the natural producing opportunity for the spiritual

1. Gen. 2:18-25; 2:3, 24-25 ...the Lord God said...not good for a man to be alone; I will make an help meet for him...and God...rested from all His work which He had created and made...man...leave...cleave unto his wife...and they shall be one flesh...naked...not ashamed...
2. Gen. 5:2 ...male and female...blessed...and called their name Adam...
3. Matthew 19:4-12 ...He...made them at the beginning male and female...leave...cleave...be one flesh...no more two, but one flesh...what therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder...
4. Prov. 31:10-31 ...a virtuous woman...the heart of her husband doth safely trust in her...her husband is known in the gates when he sitteth among the elders of the land...her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her...beauty is vain, but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised...let her own works praise her in the gates.
5. Col. 3:12-21 ...put on (these things, and)...forbearing...forgiving...love...peace...do all in the name of the Lord Jesus...wives...husbands...children...
6. Eph. 5:18-33 ...husbands, love...wife...respect her husband...
7. Rom. 16:3 ...greet Aquila and Priscilla, my helpers in Christ...

**For prayer, fellowship and further study:**

1. Does God really plan on His Son (uncreated, incarnated) getting married to a redeemed and sanctified people (created and transformed) on earth? What does your deep response have to do with you personally, with your marriage/plans, with your home life, with your church life?

2. Does the Lord, as the Bridegroom, have problems with His future Bride? If so, are His challenges the same, parallel, or different from the typical marriage among Christians?

3. Is there a difference between taking problems to the Lord and taking the Lord to your problems? If so, how does this apply in marriage? In this lesson?

4. Husbands, look at your wife several times a day this week with this deliberate thought: are you looking upon her with the kind of unwavering, demonstrated love as did Christ when He loved His Bride, the church?

Wives, look at your husband several times a day this week with this deliberate thought: are you looking upon him with the kind of grace, reverence, admiration and respect that the church ought to show her Bridegroom?

Single believers, gaze at your Lord by love, by exercise, by habit constantly. Seek to live unto Him only, and let neither man nor need separate you from your relationship of love and service to Him in His body.

5. How does the divine and human experience of taking His cross to produce life out of death apply in your marriage?

6. It is hard to find a book on marriage or relationships that is not about “fixing” each other or yourself, of alignment of views, of learning lots of things about “hows”, “how to’s”, “when to’s”, etc. Compare that to the view presented in the Bible about seeing an uplifted panoramic view of coupling, of union, a vision into which you come and bring your spouse and each other into that vision and live and practice humanity in that place.

7. What if you believe in the “Marriage supper of the Lamb” but not in your own, or vice versa?

8. How can you accept your situation and be thankful for it? In this process, is it ok if fear sometimes seems bigger than hope? Is it ok to “look back” occasionally and wish things were different? What might an unbeliever say to this? Is your response different as a Christian? Should it be?

