

Marriage and marriages are under attack, but the problems we observe are not due to marriage as such but to the people in the marriages. Jesus (and Paul) turned to Genesis to answer challenges about marriage, so it is wise to follow their example and look at the very beginnings of marriage as reported in Genesis 1–3. Chapter 1 is a summary statement on creation. Chapter 2 develops in detail the summary statement of man's creation in 1:26–31. Chapter 3 tells us how creation (with marriage) got from being very good to being bad.

**I. *The modeling of the first marriage (Genesis 1:26–31)***

1. The grammar of 1:26 requires a plurality of persons in the Godhead. There is one God, yet there is more than one person in the Godhead.
2. Verses 26–27 state that God created man in His image and strongly imply that it included something about man being made as a plurality (male and female). Though the image of God includes attributes of personality, it includes His plurality. God existed in eternity past as three persons among whom was communication and love (cf. John 15:9; 17:26).
3. This is affirmed in chapter 2 as the creation of man as male and female is described. It was not good for Adam to be alone (2:18). Only after Eve was created and they were joined as one, did it become a very good creation.

Man as male and female, joined in marriage, is man created in the image of God, which made the creation something very good. Marriage, the union of a man and a woman, was an intended part of God's very good creation and is itself something very good.

**II. *The making of the first marriage (Genesis 2)***

1. We should have appreciation for the need that existed in Adam. God demonstrated the need to Adam before creating Eve and reveals the need in general to the readers.
2. We should have appreciation for the substantial equality between Adam and Eve. Though Adam was made from the dust of the earth, Eve was formed from a part taken from Adam. Eve was of the same substance as Adam. Just as there is substantial equality between the persons of the Godhead, even though there are relational differences (e.g., Father and Son), there is substantial equality between husband and wife (though the man is set as head of his wife). There are no grounds for thinking that a woman is less than a man or a man less than a woman. The relational differences as those in the Godhead (e.g., Father and Son) do not make one less than the other.
3. We should have appreciation for the bonding in marriage (2:24). The creation of man as male and female was not simply creating two genders. God created with the intent that a man and a woman would be joined together as husband and wife and become one flesh. God works this joining (Matthew 19:6) and like the union of Christ and the Church it remains a mystery (Ephesians 5:31–32).

Therefore marriage is very special, a man and a woman joined by God into what He calls one flesh, a perfect union.

**III. *The marring of the first marriage (Genesis 3)***

That beautiful, very good relationship was soon marred – twisted thought not destroyed – an institution of God, a one-flesh union of a man and a woman joined by God, designed for intimate fellowship, but failing to be what it was intended.

1. Adam had been commanded not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil or he would die. (Death is separation physically of the spirit from the body and spiritually of the person from God.)
2. Eve succumbed to the temptation of the serpent and Adam took the fruit which she then offered him. Their eyes were opened and they knew shame.
3. The results for marriage are immediately obvious. They hid, ashamed, and sought to shift the blame for their deeds. Their relationship (and more) was cursed. The woman would rather control her husband rather than support (cf. 3:16a with 4:7). The man would be more of a tyrant over his wife rather than a loving, self-sacrificing leader (3:16b).

Problems arise in marriage, not because marriage is a faulty institution but because of the people in the marriage.

Your focus to solve and avoid problems must be on getting yourself right and not the other person. It must start with a right relationship to God. Turn from rebelling against God and accept God's substitute for the penalty of your rebellion, that is Jesus Christ who died as a substitute.

With the desire and strength which He gives, focus on such things as have become apparent in Genesis 1–3. E.g., work to become the person you should be rather than striving to change a spouse or find the right person. Learn to accept guilt and don't shift blame. Learn to communicate well—how, what and with whom. The married should care for communication within marriage. The married person should restrict deep, intimate communication with those of the opposite sex to their spouse. Guard your heart especially in the area of communicating (not just sexual attraction).

God instituted marriage at creation as something very good. God working in our hearts, transforming them to be Christlike, gives hope that marriage can still be very good.