



The Bible Truth about God's Ideal for Marriage

"In the beginning God...." What a simple but majestic way of introducing the most sublime Being in the universe--our Creator, as He is revealed in the first chapter of the Bible with the story of the creation of our world. In order to understand the topic of this article, we must begin with the nature of God Himself. It is significant to note that the Hebrew word that is used here in Genesis 1:1 is Elohim, which is plural. This indicates that all three persons of the Godhead were present at the creation of the world. This fact becomes more clear when we read Genesis 1:26: "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness." "Us" is plural and must have at least two persons involved. The mystery of this unity in the Godhead is expressed by Paul in Colossians 1:15, 16:

"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him."

John also reveals the plural nature of the Godhead in Christ:

"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made; with without Him nothing was made that has been made." John 1:1-3.

"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." John 1:18. KJV

But as we know, there are three members of the Godhead. At creation, the Holy Spirit was hovering over the waters, ready to do the bidding of the Father and the Son.

"Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters." Gen. 1:2.

"The work of God's Spirit must have some connection with the activity that was presently to be initiated, an activity bringing order out of chaos. The Spirit of God was already present, ready to act as soon as the order should be given. The Holy Spirit has always been doing this very work. This divine Agent has ever been present to assist in the work of creation and redemption, to reprove and strengthen wayward souls, to comfort the sorrowing, and to present the believer's prayers in an acceptable form to God." 1 BC 209 (not EGW.)

Now that we have identified the three members of the Godhead who were present at the creation of the world, we can begin to unravel the mystery of their functioning and interrelationship as they cooperate together, so far as they have revealed themselves to us in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy.

There are numerous places in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy that picture for us the dwelling place of the Godhead. Here are a few examples:

"After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, 'Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.' At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it and the One who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne.... From the throne came flashes of lightening, rumblings and peals of thunder. Before the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God." Rev. 4:1-3, 5.

"There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells." Ps. 46:4.

"Above the expanse over their heads was what looked like a throne of sapphire, and high above on the throne was a figure like that of a man. I saw that from what appeared to be his waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire, and that from there down he looked like fire; and brilliant light surrounded him. Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him. There was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord." Eze. 1:26-28.

"The heavenly temple is the abiding place of the King of Kings." PP 357.

But God the Father is not alone in His heavenly throne room. He has always had His beloved Son working together with Him in divine partnership.

"The Sovereign of the universe was not alone in His work of beneficence. He had an associate-- a co-worker who could appreciate His purposes, and could share His joy in giving happiness to created beings.... The Father wrought by His Son in the creation of all heavenly beings. By Him were all things created." PP 34.

"I was appointed from eternity, from the beginning, before the world began.... I was there when he set the heavens in place, when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep, when he established the clouds above and fixed securely the fountains of the deep, when he gave the sea its boundary so the waters would not overstep his command, and when he marked out the foundations of the earth. Then I was the craftsman at his side. I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in his presence, rejoicing in his whole world and delighting in mankind." Pr. 8:23-31.

What a beautiful picture of love, joy and fellowship is given here which describes the relationship that has existed from eternity between the Father and the Son. And in the creation of mankind, they chose to give to the human family the privilege of having relationships that model after the divine family.

"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness....' So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." Gen. 1: 26, 27.

Ellen White states that Adam and Eve were a new creation by God:

"Human beings were a new and distinct order. They were made in the image of God, and it was the Creator's design that they should populate the earth. They were to live in close communion with Him, receiving power from the Source of all power. Upheld by God, they were to live sinless lives." SD 7.

Apparently the ability to procreate after their own kind was the significance and purpose of this new order of beings. God had said, "Let us make man in our image." We know that angels cannot procreate. No doubt God was looking forward to the time when His Son would be born of a virgin. This could have not happened unless the ability to reproduce was given to the human race. But not only this, God also gave them the beauty of the same relationship that He had with His Son, of an emotional oneness that was to bond them together forever. Notice Adam's response when he first beheld his new bride:

"Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, for she was taken out of man.' For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh." Gen. 2:22-24.

Ellen White describes it this way:

"Man was not made to dwell in solitude; he was to be a social being. Without companionship, the beautiful scenes and delightful employment of Eden would have failed to yield perfect happiness. Even communion with angels could not have satisfied his desire for sympathy and companionship. There was none of the same nature to love, and to be loved.... a helper corresponding to him, -- one who was fitted to be his companion, and who would be one with him in love and sympathy.... to stand by his side as an equal, to be loved and protected by him.... She was his second self; showing the close union and the affectionate attachment that should exist in this relation." PP 46.

In John 1:1, 18 we see a similar relationship between God the Father and His Son:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.... No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, (mg: the Only Begotten) who is at the Father's side, has made him known."

In Greek the words "only begotten" mean "monogenes." In other words, the genes of Father and Son are the same. This is also true of Adam and Eve, because she was taken out of his side and made from his body, just as he said, "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh."

Of course this would not be true of further couples who came after the creation of Adam and Eve and married anyone they chose. But the concept of oneness remains as an example of what God would desire marriage to be like. Unfortunately, the marriage of unfit partners was a large cause of the need for God to destroy the world with a flood some 1,500 years after creation:

"When men began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose. Then the Lord said, 'My Spirit will not (mg: remain in) man forever, for he is (mg: corrupt); his days will be a hundred and twenty years.'..."

"The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. So the Lord said, 'I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth... for I am grieved that I have made them.'" Gen. 6:1-3; 5-7.

What a tragedy that something as beautiful and sacred as marriage in the image of the Godhead should become so degraded by fallen mankind that God would have to destroy them and start all over again with Noah's family. But even further atrocities have dotted the landscape of earth since then. Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities of the plain were burned with fire from God because of their sexual wickedness. The Canaanites were to be destroyed by Israel because of their sins, which included bestiality. And Jesus said that the last generation upon earth would be destroyed for their sins, some of which are similar to those that I have mentioned above.

God's ideal for marriage has always been for His people to strive for harmony of spirit, just as He created our first parents in the beginning:

"Another thing you do: You flood the Lord's altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer pays attention to your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands. You ask, 'Why?' It is because the Lord is acting as the witness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant.

"Has not the Lord made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth.

"'I hate divorce,' says the Lord God of Israel, and I hate a man's *covering himself with violence* as well as with his garment,' says the Lord Almighty. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith." Mal. 2:13-16.

* This can also mean, covering or protecting himself with violence against his wife (NIV mg.).

But what about God's people at the end of time? In a society where there is rampant family abuse and misery, and living together without marriage is common, God must have a people who model emotional and spiritual health in their relationships with each other and in the family. Knowing that the family unit is the foundation of society itself, Satan bends forth every effort to bring people together who are not suitable for each other, and thus bring forth children who are damaged by family strife and unhappiness.

"Satan is busily engaged in influencing those who are wholly unsuited to each other to unite their interests. He exults in this work, for by it he can produce more misery and hopeless woe to the human family than by exercising his skill in any other direction." MYP 455.

"This step taken unwisely is one of the most effective means of ruining the usefulness of young men and women. Life becomes a burden, a curse. No one can so effectually ruin a woman's happiness and usefulness, and make life a heart sickening burden, as her own husband; and no one can do one hundredth part as much to chill the hopes and aspirations of a man, to paralyze his energies and ruin his influence and prospects, as his own wife. It is from the marriage hour that many men and women date their success or failure in this life, and their hopes of the future life....

"Marriage is something that will influence and affect your life both in this world and in the world to come." AH 43.

Because marriage and family is such an important part of our lives, it is also a vital part of the cleansing of our records in heaven by Jesus, our High Priest, who is ministering now in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary. As He goes through our records, He invites us to come into harmony and agreement with Him concerning everything in our past and present life, including the relationships in our original family, as well as our present life in whatever situation we find ourselves. The Bible says that God "knit me together in my mother's womb," and that "all the days ordained for me were written in [His] book before one of them came to be." Ps. 139:13, 16. No one has lived the plan for their lives flawlessly except our Savior, Jesus. But as He is now interceding for us in the final atonement for our sins, we can have the privilege of being forgiven, cleansed, and restored to the first dominion as though we had never sinned. [See Micah 4:1-8.]

As a counselor for many years, I have heard the stories of untold misery and abuse that affect people for the rest of their lives. We are fast coming to the place where Sodom and Gomorrah were before they were destroyed. But in the remaining time that we have to be upon this earth before Jesus comes, I believe that God wants us to do everything in our power to make things right in our families. If there are unhappy differences between you and your spouse, your children, your parents and siblings, or extended family members, pray that God will guide you in a pathway of healing. This is the fulfillment of the Elijah message for the last days:

"Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire, says the Lord Almighty. Not a root or a branch will be left to them. But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings....

"See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse." Mal. 4:1, 2; 5, 6.

In the books of heaven, God has written an original plan for each person where they would be best suited to work for Him. Notice these quotations from Ellen White:

"Each has his place in the eternal plan of heaven.... Not more surely is the place prepared for us in the heavenly mansions than is the special place designated on earth where we are to work for God." COL 326, 7.

"To every nation and to every individual God has assigned a place in His great plan." PK 536.

"God has a special work for everyone to do, and each one of us may do well the work which God has assigned him. The only thing we have to fear on our part is that we shall not keep our eyes continually fixed upon Jesus, that we shall not have an eye single to the glory of God." 2 SM 273.

Obviously, when God's plan for us includes having a marriage partner, He would certainly choose a person who would understand and be supportive of our work for God. Unfortunately, there are many people whose lives are not so fortunate. Strife, hate, anger, resentment, infidelity, rejection, abandonment, and all kinds of abuse happen daily in families around the world. The cup of iniquity is almost full, and the close of probation for this world is near.

But among God's people, there needs to be a revival of primitive godliness which includes the cleansing of families. Every sincere Christian should spend time in heart searching and repentance before God in prayer for everything in our lives that has not been in accordance with God's will. We should do everything possible to make things right with each other. And having done so, we can trust God to add His grace and healing to our situation.

But after having done everything to provide for healing and restitution, some will find themselves with a partner who does not choose to walk the same pathway. In such situations Paul gives this advice:

"To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife. To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord): If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not

divorce him. For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband....

"But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances. God has called us to live in peace." 1Cor. 7:10-15.

How sad it is that we have come so far from God's original plan of perfect marital relationships! How much suffering this is caused only God can measure. But the time is soon coming when God will make everything right in the human family. As God's remnant people respond to the call of the True Witness and cleanse their lives from everything that is sinful, the loud cry will be given under the power of the latter rain. Family ties will be broken where one person wants to accept the truth and others do not, and they will leave unbelieving family and friends to follow God all the way.

"I heard those clothed with the armor speak forth the truth with great power. It had effect. Many had been bound; some wives by their husbands, and some children by their parents. The honest who had been prevented from hearing the truth now eagerly laid hold upon it. All fear of their relatives was gone, and the truth alone was exalted to them. They had been hungering and thirsting for truth; it was dearer and more precious than life. I asked what had made this great change. An angel answered, 'It is the latter rain, the refreshing from the presence of the Lord, the loud cry of the third angel.'" EW 271.

Dear friends, this time is near. The suffering that Satan has caused in the human family is about to end. And all those who love and obey the voice of our heavenly Bridegroom will be cleansed and made ready for the wedding of the Lamb. May each of us heed the call to the wedding ceremony and be ready to go with Him forever to our heavenly home.

"Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen bright and clean, was given her to wear. Fine linen stands for the righteousness of the saints." Rev. 19:6-8.

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