

Understanding Marriage - Two Big Ideas

by David Guzik

David Guzik emphasizes the significance of marriage and family in God's design while cautioning against idolizing them over our commitment to Christ.

Duration: 33:35

Scripture: Ephesians 5:22, 2 Peter 1:2-3, Revelation 19:7

Topics: "Christian Marriage", "Family Values"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor David Guzik discusses the importance of marriage and family according to the Bible. He emphasizes that our marriages and families are important to God and that they should be valued and cherished. The sermon focuses on the big picture of what the Bible teaches about marriage, rather than specific details. Pastor Guzik highlights the idea that a healthy marriage and family bring glory to God and that God's Word provides guidance and security in navigating these relationships.

Transcript

This is the first message in the series, Understanding Marriage, from Ephesians chapter 5. The title of this teaching is, Two Big Ideas. Let's join our teacher, Pastor David Guzik, speaking at Calvary Chapel of Simi Valley. Our text this morning is 2 Peter chapter 1, beginning at verse 2. But what you should know is, we're not going to spend a lot of time in 2 Peter.

I'm beginning a series this morning on marriage, and going very carefully through one of the most famous passages in the Bible, regarding the subject of marriage. That's Ephesians chapter 5. Now, as we do that, I'm taking this morning out as a time to do something a little bit unique for us. Instead of going verse by verse through a passage of Scripture, I feel a real need, before we get started, in that Ephesians 5 passage, to lay some groundwork.

To really bring the right kind of foundation to our thinking of seeing the prominence of God's Word in speaking to the subject of marriage. Take a look here at 2 Peter chapter 1, beginning at verse 2. Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises. Peter's telling us that for the believer, great and precious promises have been given to us primarily in God's Word.

And it's in these and through these that God has given us, if you notice here, in verse 3, all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him. In other words, the answers are there. God has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness, and He's given them to us in His Word.

What I find wonderful about this is that there's such a safety, there's such a security for us when we put our focus on and when we cling to what's given to us in God's Word. Just before first service, somebody gave me a news item that was taken off of a website. I'll just read the headline to you.

I hadn't heard about it before this morning, but maybe you had. The headline simply reads, Ugandan Domsday Cult in Mass Suicide Blades. It describes how in Uganda there was this strange quasi-biblical cult where two or three hundred people gathered together in a church building and after an elaborate dinner, they dressed up in robes with white and green and black trim and such, and as they were there, all in these robes, they spent a long time in singing and chanting and all these things, and through the evening, they ended up dousing the building with flammable liquids, gasoline or whatever, and then they just incinerated all of themselves in a bizarre suicide cult.

Now, these people believed they were spiritual. These people probably, if you would have asked them, would have considered themselves followers of God, perhaps even Christians. But obviously, there's nothing, nothing, nothing biblical at all in what they did or in how they thought, and how dangerous it is for us to leave the anchor of biblical thinking to drift off into the waters of just human opinion or human approach or emotions or feelings or whatever.

We need that anchor securely planted in God's Word. You read of something like this in the news, and it's tragic, not just for the immediate loss of these people and their families and all of that, but it's tragic just for the way of thinking that these people were bound in. The truth of God's Word and the anchor that God's Word gives sets us free.

So, as we come and approach this subject of marriage, I think it's very important for us to take a step back, and I want to take a look at the big picture this morning of the Bible, and see what the Bible has to tell us about marriage. Maybe not so much in specific this or that and the other thing, but sort of just in the big picture. You see, I want us to be able to notice this morning two big ideas about marriage and family from the Scriptures.

The first big idea is simply this, is that our marriages and our families are important to God. Now, you may be thinking, well, I took an hour and a half out of my morning for this. Marriages and families are important to God? Thanks, Pastor, I already knew that.

Can you move on to the next thing? Well, I have to say, I thought I knew that as well. But as I dug into the Scriptures, I realized that I genuinely misunderstood just how important marriages and families are to God. I didn't appreciate how much of God's Word speaks to the issues of marriage and family.

I mean, after all, man did not invent marriage. Man did not invent the institution of the family. The first marriage was planned and set in motion by God.

Marriage is God's institution. And He has an interest in strong, good marriages and families. Every once in a while, you'll read about, or in the history books, you'll read about how a culture tries to do away with marriage.

Some communist cultures tried to do this in the earlier part of our century. They figured, well, you know, you don't need a family to raise children. We'll just put them in a warehouse, sort of a big orphanage, and the state will raise the children.

And then the parents, they can just be good workers, loyal and productive to the state, and the children will be raised in this socialist paradise and so forth and so on, and it never worked, did it? Because there's something deeply ingrained within the heart of man that God has put in us that says marriage and family, it's important. It's God's invention. It's God's gift to the human race.

If you want to see how big, how important it is to God, how He is, as I said in 2 Peter 1, how it says He's given us all things that pertain to life and godliness, and how this works out in the area of marriage and family, you just consider how virtually every book of the Bible speaks to the issue of marriage and family. And I mean it. Virtually every book of the Bible.

Let me show you. Genesis. Genesis chapter 2, verse 18.

God looked at Adam's unmarried state, and He said that it was not good. So to bless and complete Adam, God gave him a wife. He didn't just give him a companion.

He didn't just give him a best friend. He gave him a wife. Again, again, not just a companion of either gender.

He gave him a marriage. A marriage relationship. That was going to satisfy Adam's deepest need for companionship.

Adam's deepest need for completion. By the way, the Genesis chapter 2 passage is also very careful to point out that this is God's ordained pattern for all of mankind, not just a one-time deal for Adam. The book of Exodus.

In Exodus chapter 12, verse 21, family is important enough to God so that the Passover lamb was to be eaten as a family unit. Exodus chapter 20, in the Ten Commandments, where it says, you shall not commit adultery. That's a command that shows that God believes marriage is important because He's trying to protect the sanctity of the marriage vow.

Even Exodus chapter 20, verse 17, you shall not covet your neighbor's wife. It shows that marriage is important enough to God that He commands that we guard our hearts from even desiring another spouse. Exodus chapter 21, verse 3, a remarkable passage where God is promoting and protecting the marriage rights of slaves.

Isn't that significant? In the ancient world, slaves were seen as property. They meant nothing. But God said, no, they're not nothing to me and their marriages are important to me.

I'm going to protect the marriage rights of slaves. The book of Leviticus. Leviticus chapter 20 shows us that marriage and family are so important to God that He gives specific commands to preserve the sanctity of marriage and family.

The book of Numbers. Numbers chapters 1 and 2. They show that family is so important to God that He commanded the camp of Israel to be organized according to families. Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy chapter 7 shows that marriage and family are so important to God that He forbade Israel from marrying the ungodly pagans of the land of Canaan. Deuteronomy chapter 22 shows us that marriage was so important to God that He commanded severe penalties against the violation of the marriage covenant. Joshua chapter 13 shows that family is so important to God that He devised the land of Israel according to family units.

Joshua chapter 24 shows that marriage is so important to God that Joshua declares as a representative of the Lord, as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. Judges. Judges chapter 3 shows that marriage and family are so important to God that He disciplined Israel for their intermarriage with the pagan nation surrounding Him.

The book of Ruth. The book of Ruth is all about marriage and family. Chapter 1 shows that marriage and family are so important.

It shows it by the outstanding faithfulness of Ruth to her mother-in-law Naomi. The book of Ruth as a whole shows that marriage and family are important to God because it tells the story of a romance and a love between Ruth and Boaz and the importance of their marriage and of the children of that marriage to God's unfolding plan of redemption. 1 Samuel.

2 Samuel. On into 1 Kings and 2 Kings. Ezra chapter 9 shows that marriage and family are important to God by showing that it was only among the people of God and to preserve the strength and the marriages and families among God's people.

Job. Job chapter 1 shows that family is important to God by showing the care and the concern that the righteous man Job had for his children. Psalms.

Psalms 128 shows that marriage and family are important to God by its beautiful blessing on both marriage and children. Psalm 68 shows that it's a beautiful and succinct statement of the regard that God has for family where He simply says, God sets the solitary in families. Friends, I could go on and on.

Proverbs. Song of Solomon. That's a book all about marriage.

Isaiah. The similarity between the marriage relationship and the relationship with the Lord. The book of Jeremiah.

All and all and over again. The beautiful promise of Jeremiah 31. It shows how important marriage is to God where it says, At the same time, says the Lord, I will be the God of all the families of Israel and they shall be My people.

Ezekiel. Hosea. Malachi.

The last book of the Old Testament shows how important marriage is to God and how He hates divorce. It shows how God values the family union as a whole and it speaks of God's desire for the family union to produce godly offspring. Matthew.

Mark. Luke. First Corinthians you could go to.

It shows that marriage and family are important to God in the way that God rebukes those who violate the sanctity of the marriage covenant. First Corinthians 7 shows that marriage and family are important to God in the way that God gives specific, detailed information on singleness, marriage, divorce, remarriage,

intimate relations in the married life. Ephesians.

Colossians. 1 Timothy. We could get all the way down to the book of Revelation.

Revelation chapter 19, verse 7 shows that God thinks marriage is important in the way that the marriage relationship illustrates our own relationship with God. I think I've painted enough of the picture. I want you to know I went through about maybe one third of what I could have gone through just in my prepared notes.

And that's just scratching the surface. You get the idea here. God's word speaks about marriage and family.

Both in clear command and in general principle. So given these and many other passages I think we can say two things at the very least. Number one, this means that a healthy marriage and a healthy family gives glory to God.

I think that's an important principle for us to really latch hold of. For instance, there's a more important reason for you to pursue a strong, healthy marriage and a strong, healthy family. There's more important reasons than just that your life is a real drag when things are bad at home.

I think we'll all agree that that's true. But it goes even far beyond our own personal comfort, our own personal pleasure in life. Because one of the greatest pleasures we can have is the pleasure of a healthy, happy home.

Friends, there's a responsibility we have to glorify Jesus Christ in our marriages. To glorify God. We've been put on this earth for more than our own personal enjoyment, more than our own personal pleasure.

We've been put on this earth first and foremost to glorify the God who made us. And so that is a beautiful reward, a beautiful payoff for understanding and knowing God's Word when it comes to the marriage and the family relationship. The other thing, since God's Word speaks so much about marriage and since it is such an important subject to God, we can also say that it's also important to the devil, isn't it? Though for a different reason.

It's important to the devil because he wants to oppose God's plan any time, any place he can. And he has such an interest in working against healthy marriages and families. And so we're not surprised to see the world, the flesh and the devil, each one of them working against the things in our hearts and our lives that would produce a strong, healthy marriage and a family.

Friends, do you get the point? I mean, I've painted the picture, but I think it needs to be really painted out in front of us just how important marriages and families are to God. But let me say this in the next point. Marriage and family are important to God, but they are not the most important things to Him.

It is possible to make marriage or family an idol and to put them before God. Let me give you some examples just from the New Testament. Matthew chapter 4. James and John left their fishing business and their father to follow Jesus.

If their devotion to their father would have gone beyond their devotion to Jesus, they would have never left Him and become the disciples and the apostles James and John. In Matthew chapter 8, a man wanted to delay following Jesus so that he could be with his father until his father died. And Jesus spoke against this,

saying to the man, follow me and let the dead bury their dead.

In Jesus' view, this man had to put devotion to his father behind his devotion to Jesus. He wasn't doing this and this was a bad thing. In Matthew chapter 10, Jesus spoke of persecution from family members and how God would give His people strength to endure persecution from the family.

And later on in Matthew chapter 10 again, Jesus spoke of the need to put God before family. Let me read you here. Matthew chapter 10, beginning at verse 33.

But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven. Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.

For I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a man's enemies will be those of his own household. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. Those are strong words. Maybe even shocking words from the mouth of our Savior.

But you get the point that He's making, right? He's saying, I come before your family relations. I come before your family relationships. Matthew chapter 12 describes a time when Jesus was asked to give His family, that is, His mother and His brothers, a place of preference before other people.

And in reply, it says, again, this is Matthew chapter 12, it says that Jesus looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and He said, Here is My mother and My brothers. For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and My mother. In Matthew chapter 19, Jesus speaks of those who must give up houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands for My name's sake, Jesus said.

And He also speaks of the reward that they would receive. Finally, in Luke chapter 14, Jesus gave a parable of the Great Supper where a generous man invites many to a wedding feast, but all the people invited initially reject the invitation. Isn't that amazing? The invitation for the gospel goes out.

You come to a free banquet, a free dinner, and you're saying this to people who are essentially starving people. They say, Come, come, and they all make excuses. And one of the excuses that Jesus says in this parable from Luke chapter 14, one of the excuses made is this, I've married a wife and I cannot come.

Jesus points out that this is insufficient. This is an example of someone who in an ungodly way put their marriage relationship before following after Jesus Christ. Friends, I think it's a very important principle for us to understand.

Marriage and family are very important to God, but they are not the most important things. Now, I know that the principle that I've just stated to you, I know two things about that principle, let me say. First of all, I know that it is absolutely biblically true.

Secondly, I know that it could be incredibly abused by someone with a wrong heart. I mean, you could think of a man or a woman just openly and blatantly neglecting their family, neglecting their wife or their husband or their children or whatever family obligations they have and say, Well, you know, I'm doing it for

the Lord. Where really, their claim to be doing it for the Lord is just an excuse for their own selfishness.

That can nowhere be countenanced or accepted by the Bible. This principle of putting Jesus first before our family, it's a principle that's true, but we have to understand that there really honestly isn't all that many situations where it applies. Most of the time when we diligently serve and care for and give attention and all the things we should do for our family, most of those times we're fulfilling the command of Christ.

It's very, very rare that we're commanded to make a choice between family and God. Most of the time when we're serving our family, we are serving God. At the same time, we do have to understand there are those instances.

There are those times when a person says, Well, my relationship with Jesus Christ, that comes first. So therefore, I will not allow marriage or family pressure to keep me from living for Jesus Christ. Therefore, I won't invest time and attention in marriage while neglecting my relationship with Jesus Christ.

Jesus comes first. Might I also say that another way a person could commit this sin of putting their marriage or family before God, another way they could do it, is by choosing to marry an unbeliever, a non-Christian. The Bible says that that's a sin.

God says you should not be unequally yoked with an unbeliever. And if you're a Christian here, and if you're thinking about someone you want to marry, if you're romantically involved with somebody, if you're dating somebody, and if their life isn't committed to Jesus Christ, I want to say it just straightforwardly. I hope it's not too abrupt to just say you're in sin.

You're putting marriage or family or a relationship before obedience to God, because He says don't do that. And you're saying, well, Lord, this relationship to me is more important than obeying you. You're putting that relationship, and it might be a fine relationship, it might be a wonderful relationship.

I'm not here to judge that. What I am here to say is that Jesus said you should obey me and honour me and serve me first. So we understand that we have to walk a balance, don't we? We must regard our marriages and our families as important, because God does.

At the same time, we must never make our marriages or our families idols that come before our commitment to Jesus Christ. Friends, that's the first big idea. Now for the second big idea.

Here it is. Christianity makes a difference in marriage. You might be disappointed at that being a big idea.

It might seem so plainly self-evident that you're thinking, this is a waste of my time. He's telling me two things that I already know. Well, if you really know, not just somewhere in the trivial pursuit area of your mind, and you really know in your mind and in your heart, if you know that Christianity makes a difference in marriage, then might I say I think you're one of the few in God's church today.

You're one of the few in the Christian culture. Because when I look at what people are really interested in, what they really go for as far as marriage, it's not really understanding how Jesus Christ changes their marriage. Friends, based on the enormous amount of scriptural material on marriage, we can safely say that God speaks to marriage in the Word of God.

I'm not going out on a limb to say that, am I? God tells us many things about marriage. Let me give you a little list I've worked through. This is what the Bible tells us about marriage.

Are you ready for this? The Bible tells us the origin of marriage. It tells us the goal of marriage. It tells us the foundation for a good marriage.

It tells us the kind of person to marry. How to find the right person to marry. It tells us the role of the husband in marriage.

It tells us the reason for the role of the husband in marriage. It tells us the role of the wife in marriage. It tells us the reason for the role of the wife in marriage.

It tells us the role of in-laws in marriage. It tells us the role of outside friends in marriage. The Bible tells us examples of godly husbands.

It gives us examples of godly wives. It tells us how to minister to our unsaved spouse. The Bible tells us God's attitude towards divorce.

It tells us when divorce is and isn't permitted. The Bible tells us the role of romance and sexual love in marriage. It tells us about the frequency of sexual intimacy in marriage.

It tells us what is and isn't allowed in the sexual relationship in marriage. The Bible tells us how wives should dress. It tells us how husbands should support and provide for their families.

It talks to us about communication and anger management. The Bible tells us about forgiveness and reconciliation in marriage. It tells us what to do in the aftermath of adultery.

It tells us about separation, reconciliation, and remarriage. The Bible even tells us about angels in marriage. And it tells us about the place of marriage in the world to come.

I think the Bible tells us a lot about marriage. I don't know how many questions there are about marriage that aren't covered by the Bible. But with all of this amazing information about marriage in the Bible, it's astonishing that many preachers, many writers, many counselors, many experts virtually ignore the Bible in their efforts to help marriages.

You go down to a Christian bookstore and you look at the books on marriage. And some of them are good, some of them aren't so good. But almost all of them that I've found, I would say one thing about it.

The reason why they're writing them this way is because this is what people want to read. I would describe them as eminently practical. They tell you what to do.

And I'll just give an example of this. I trust that nobody will take this wrong as if what I'm saying is a bad thing or a wrong thing. I just wanted to give you an idea of what a typical thing might be in a marriage book that you get in a Christian bookstore.

I would say, establish a date night. Buy your wife flowers. Always have a nice dinner in the house picked up when your husband comes home.

Work on this. And all those practical things are very helpful and they're very useful for a relationship. But what they are not is the foundation for a good marriage.

What they are not is the foundation for a biblical marriage. And what I fear when I take a look at the Christian world today is I find Christians who want to have their marriages better who are being flooded

with practical instructions. And many of the practical instructions in and of themselves are wonderful.

But they don't have a foundation upon which to base those practical instructions. And so what you have is you have exactly a beautiful house being built up with no foundation. Friends, what happens with that beautiful house is it can be great for a while.

But when things really start shaking, there's nothing to rely on. I think that the practical instructions are wonderful and helpful if they're built on the foundation. If they're coupled with that.

And I have to be honest, I've had the frustration of reading many, many books on marriage written by Christian authors, published by Christian publishers, marketed to the Christian public and sold in Christian bookstores. And these books virtually ignore the Bible in the place of Jesus Christ in building a strong and healthy marriage. Now, there's many other books which quote scriptures here and there.

But the real information they give, the real advice they have comes from the wisdom and the experience of the writer. Not the explanation of biblical principles and explaining them as biblical principles. I've even said that some of these books could be titled How to Have a Great Marriage Without God.

Because that's essentially what they're saying. You want to have a great marriage? Then make the date night and bring home the flowers and do this practical thing and do that practical thing. And friends, there's no doubt if you do those things, it'll make an improvement in your marriage.

There's no doubt about it all and there's no doubt that we need to do those things. But let's not kid ourselves, that's not a biblical foundation for marriage. It's not.

Biblical foundation for marriage comes from having a biblical framework in our minds for understanding what the scriptures say. And so what I hope is that through the next several weeks as we go through this study, we'll build such a foundation that you can go out there and buy all those books and all those other things and they'll be of greater help to you than ever before. Because you'll take the practical and be able to build it on a truly deep, strong, biblical foundation.

Friends, when we ignore the Bible, when we ignore the Lordship of Jesus Christ in a Christian marriage, we essentially say, we say you could be a Satan worshipper and if you take someone's advice, you can have a great marriage. It just doesn't really matter if you're a Christian or not. It says you can have a great marriage without God.

It says when it comes to having a strong, healthy marriage, it doesn't really matter if you're a Christian or not. Most of all, I guess what some of those books are really saying is that their advice about marriage is more important than God's advice. Friends, I don't agree with any of that.

I believe that the real answers to marriage problems are found in the Bible. I believe that Jesus Christ makes a difference in our marriages. And I believe that the wisdom of God's Word, even if men and women regard it as foolishness, that the wisdom of God's Word is what we need to understand to succeed in marriage.

I'm going to go out on a limb and say that when we really get into this Ephesians 5 passage, some of what we look at and some of what I explain to you, it may seem as foolishness to you. It may even seem offensive. But I just ask that you measure it by one measure.

Is it what the Bible says? That's all I feel compelled to present to you. Is it what the Bible says? And if it offends or if it seems foolish, just come back and say, is it what the Bible says? Is it what God says to us? Friends, I believe that there's power in God's Word to transform hard, bitter, unloving, unforgiving hearts in marriage. You see, that's the great thing about God's Word.

It's not just advice, is it? There's a ministry, there's a power, there's a healing strength in God's Word that goes far, far beyond even the best, best human advice. So, if you would, turn in your Bibles to Ephesians chapter 5. And I just want to read this passage, and that's about it. And then we'll start next week taking a look at it piece by piece.

Ephesians chapter 5. I'm going to begin pretty much at the wrong place. And that's verse 22. Next week we're going to get a better start and begin at a better place.

But just for the sake of tradition almost, I'll begin at verse 22. Ephesians chapter 5. Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church.

And He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it.

That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word. That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies.

He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.

For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless, let each one of you, in particular, so love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

Ladies and gentlemen, that's a goldmine. I'm going to spend the next several weeks tapping that very rich vein in God's Word. Because I believe that the grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the Word of the Lord endures forever.

So let's remember it, friends. Number one, marriage belongs to God, and God's Word has a lot to say about marriage. Number one.

And number two, the second big idea that we talked about this morning. Being a Christian really matters in having a good marriage. Father, I pray that you would cement those things in our hearts, and I pray that you prepare our hearts.

We hope you've been blessed by this teaching from God's Word, the Bible. For more tapes and Bible study resources from Calvary Chapel of Simi Valley, call us at 805-527-0199 or look us up on the internet at calvarychapel.com/simi_valley

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