

TEXT Ephesians 5:22-32; Matthew 19:3-6

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES Genesis 2:18, 22-24; 1 Peter 3:1-7

OBJECTIVE The students will discern and be able to relate that God intended marriage to be a unique covenantal commitment of a man and woman which excludes all others from its intimacy, and that God expressly forbids the breaking of this union except by death.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. — Mark 10:9

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. — Genesis 2:24

**ANSWER
TITLE:**

When Two Are One

**SEARCH
TITLE:**

**The Responsibility of
Marriage**

REFERENCE INFORMATION

Marriage is a personal relationship ordained by God. It is also a social institution regulated by the laws of God and the laws and customs which a society develops to safeguard its own continuity and welfare. When God's laws for marriage are broken so also is the stability of the home, family, society, and nation.

The total unity of persons in marriage indicated by the term "one flesh" demands monogamy and indissolubility even as is the union of Christ with the Church.

The allowance made in Matthew 5:32 for a man to put away his wife for the cause of fornication refers to the Jewish people and their marriage vows. When betrothed, a woman was considered a wife though the couple did not come together. If during this betrothal time she was untrue, he was allowed to go through a legal proceeding equivalent to a divorce to break the betrothal. Once the marriage was consummated, if she was untrue, under Jewish law she was an adulteress and would be stoned.

YOUR OPENER

The Responsibility of Marriage

TEXT: Ephesians 5:22-32; Matthew 19:3-6

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Genesis 2:18,22-24; 1 Peter 3:1-7

KEY VERSE: Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. — Genesis 2:24

RESPONSES

1. Use the students' responses to discuss the responsibilities that are unique to a marriage relationship. The husband and wife are obligated to remain faithful to each other until death separates them. See also Mark 10:9 and Romans 7:2. When a couple enters into marriage, a new home is being established. The possibility of raising a family brings about responsibilities that a couple must face. They have not only the financial responsibility of their home but also, and even more importantly, the spiritual responsibility.

2. The discussion from this question should show the need for a husband and wife to take conscientiously their responsibilities to the Lord in prayer. In doing so, they will find themselves drawing closer to each other. Discuss the importance of facing life's responsibilities as a solid unit, bonded together with God's guidance.

3. Use this discussion to address the Bible's stand against divorce and remarriage and/or adultery. See Matthew 5:32; Mark 10:6-12; Luke 16:18; Romans 7:3. You might choose to bring out that the Bible makes no mention of "innocent parties" but simply states that if a divorced person marries again, he/she commits adultery and whoever marries a divorced person commits adultery.

"I do," is the beginning of the closest of all human relationships—marriage. Marriage was instituted by God in the Garden of Eden. God's plan is that man should leave his father and mother and be as one with his wife. This makes a wife the closest companion a man has, and the closest companion that a woman has is her husband. Together they can enjoy the pleasures of life, share hardships and sorrows, and can be a comfort and strength to each other.

1. A Christian marriage is a total commitment of two people to the person of Jesus Christ and then to each other, a commitment in which nothing is withheld. It is also a pledge of mutual fidelity, and a union which helps both parties become all that God intends for them to be. Along with the commitment of marriage comes responsibilities. List some of the responsibilities that marriage places upon a couple. In addition to the text given, use Deuteronomy 6:6,7 and 1 Timothy 5:8.

2. God can and will use a Christian marriage for His purpose. He will mold and refine the parties involved for their own spiritual benefit and for His glory. However, this can occur only when both husband and wife determine to fulfill the directives God has outlined for their marriage. How should a husband and wife meet the spiritual responsibilities of marriage?

3. After a man and a woman take the wedding vows, they are married for life. Explain what Jesus meant by the phrase, "let not man put asunder."

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

4. Clarifying the husband-wife roles in a marriage can eliminate one of the major causes of marital disruption. The Word of God has specific directives regarding this. The Biblical assignment of authority and responsibility does not create a rigid relationship, but rather, it promotes order and understanding. Explain what Paul the Apostle meant when he stated that “the husband is the head of the wife.”

5. In a God-directed marriage, each person is a complement to the other. Man realizes that woman was created for him; woman realizes that man is incomplete without her. Each cherishes the other as an extension and completion of himself. Amplify this thought using the words, “For no man ever yet hated his own flesh.”

6. The bond of love in marriage is used as an illustration of the much closer tie that binds the Church (the Bride) to Jesus Christ (the Bridegroom). List the similarities.

7. Why is it so important in a Christian marriage that the couple show love, honor, and preference to each other? See 1 Peter 3:5-7.

8. How can a couple be assured that their marriage will be blessed of the Lord, and that they will continue to be happy together?

4. Through the discussion of Ephesians 5:22-24, the students should understand that it is God’s plan for man to be the head of the home, just as Christ is the head of the Church. This should not be thought to indicate that both the husband and wife do only what he thinks or desires. The husband is commanded to love his wife as his own body (Ephesians 5:28). He will be mindful of her desires and wishes, and they should openly communicate with each other in all matters.

5. As your students discuss their thoughts, they should bring out that a man should think as much of his wife as he thinks of himself. If he does this, he will be looking for ways to please his wife. Discuss the necessity of spouses being unselfish one to the other. Ask the class to suggest ways that a husband and wife could better please each other.

6. Some of the points brought out in discussion may include that Christ is the head of the Church—the husband is the head of the wife (verse 23). Christ gave of himself—the husband and wife must give of themselves unselfishly (verse 25). Spouses should love, nourish, and cherish each other, as Christ the Church (verse 29). Unity and oneness is evidenced (verses 30 and 31).

7. Use the answers to this question to emphasize the importance of being compatible and getting along well together “. . . that your prayers be not hindered.”

8. Allow time for your students to express their thoughts. No doubt a variety of suggestions will be offered, and the discussion relating to this question should lead to a good overall wrap-up. The key to a successful marriage is found in the word *together*. Pray together, read the Bible together, and communicate with each other. Couples should never be afraid to state their honest convictions and feelings to each other. Take all problems, sadnesses, and joys to the Lord in prayer together. A close, happy marriage (in the Lord) will enhance the couple’s spiritual life.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

To what other relationship does Christ liken marriage?

Many young people today say that marriage spoils or ruins a good relationship. What would make them think this way? How could you help them think differently?

In the ANSWER story, Grandpa Smith told a parable to illustrate marriage. What were some of the comparisons?

The key verse says, "let not man put asunder." What does that mean?

What is marriage? Discuss the institution of marriage.

God instituted marriage. Discuss what God's plan for marriage had been and still is from the beginning (Genesis 2:18-24).

Why does God want us to be careful in choosing a companion?

What is the world's view of marriage today? Why do you think there are so many breakups of marriages in the world today?

Today there are couples who live together as husband and wife but without a marriage license or a wedding. Why is this wrong? Does God expect us to obey the laws of the land concerning this? Why or why not?

Is divorce okay if you can't get along? Why or why not?

THINGS TO DO

Invite a couple who have been married for many years to come to your class. Let the group interview them regarding their secrets to a successful marriage. (Allow some class time ahead of their arrival to prepare questions.) You may wish to divide your group and allow some time for your girls to talk to the lady, while your boys have a discussion with the man.

Bring to class, articles and clippings from newspapers and magazines relating to divorces (percentages), broken homes (children from such homes), remarriages (articles saying, "This is his 3rd, her 2nd," etc.). Discuss with the class what the effects are on children, the couple themselves, society in general. Conclude by emphasizing

ing that only by allowing God to plan and direct our marriage and relationships can we expect to find true and lasting happiness.

Bring a marriage license or certificate to class. Point out that, though this is only a piece of paper, it is significant as a contract made before God.

Bring a tape recording of a wedding ceremony as performed in our church. Discuss the meaning of the key phrases in the marriage vows.

Place a light behind you so that you cast a shadow on the wall. When you move it moves. It doesn't argue; it doesn't go off in another direction. Explain that God wants our relationship with our companion to be just as close as that. We move together toward the same goals, no one comes between, and it's a lasting relationship.

Answers for ANSWER

