

The Ball and Chain

One Plus One Equals One – Introduction

“Marriage is a wonderful institution, but who would want to live in an institution.” - H. L. Mencken

Would you agree with this quote? When was the last time you heard a joke about marriage? I would guess that it reflected more of the quote above than it depicted a positive perspective of marriage. Unfortunately, people consider marriage an institution that they want no part of. They do not see any benefits to marriage.

How does the above quote strike you? How would you describe your marriage?

How does our world view marriage?

It someone lived on a deserted island for most of his or her early life and then made it back to civilization, it would not take long for them to see society’s attitude of marriage. Everyone has their own view of marriage which only confuses everyone else. Pile on top of that the movie industry. It is hard to find a movie that promotes marriage in a positive light. They can make so much more money when they ridicule and laugh at marriage. Affairs and immorality are so much more exciting and profitable than a good marriage.

Society cannot help us, but then again, our experiences are hard to work through as well. It is hard to find a family that has not been touched by divorce, immorality, or abuse. We think a good marriage is a home that has two people who got a paper signed and now share the same last name and a place to live. They do not fight too much and manage to put up with each other. With this in mind, many of us have experienced loved ones going through a divorce or dealing with infidelity. We may have been part of broken relationships and yelling matches. We make excuses by saying, “Everyone goes through this. This is normal.”

Have you experienced heartbreak in through a broken marriage? What happened?

The world wants us to think that marriage is no big deal, but if marriage was no big deal then why are broken marriages so devastating? It does not add up.

“The man said, ‘This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man.’ For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.”

Genesis 2:23-24

"Yet you say, 'For what reason?' Because the Lord has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. But not one has done so who has a remnant of the Spirit. And what did that one do while he was seeking a godly offspring? Take heed then to your spirit, and let no one deal treacherously against the wife of your youth. 'For I hate divorce,' says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'and him who covers his garment with wrong,' says the Lord of hosts. So take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously."

Malachi 2:14-16

It is no wonder many people see marriage as the "ball and chain." It is one of the few things that has been attacked, trashed, and thrown about since the beginning.

How has the attack of marriage affected our society? If marriage falls apart, what are the results?

When society confuses marriage, then everything else becomes confused or begins to fall apart.

- The roles of the husband and wife
- The security of the home
- The building blocks of the church
- The nucleus of the community
- The foundation of the government
- The understanding of sexuality
- The relationship of God to mankind

Of course, all this is not clearly seen, because the enemy does not want us to know that a proper understanding of marriage is a fundamental pillar to our growth and development. Let's take a little quiz. This will help us see how important marriage is and maybe motivate us to understand it differently.

1. When was marriage instituted?

2. Why was marriage instituted?

3. Who created and instituted marriage?

4. Out of the Ten Commandments, two reference marriage. What are they?

5. Scripture uses marriage as an analogy for what relationship in the Old Testament?

6. Scripture uses marriage as an analogy for what relationship in the New Testament?

7. What is one role of the husband?

8. What is the one role of the wife?

9. Why was sex created?

10. Is there ever a point within marriage that it can never be restored?

11. How does the present marriage of parents affect the future marriage of children?

How did you do? I am not asking how many right answers you got, but how did this quiz affect you? Did you answer confidently or with hesitation? It's okay. These next few pages will take us on a journey through Scripture as we seek to understand marriage the way God intended. We as a society have been aiming at the wrong mark and standard for too long. We have settled for good marriages when God wants us to experience great marriages.

Our standard for marriage is low. God's standard for marriage is far greater. With that said, I believe that every marriage can be saved. I understand that every marriage will not be saved, but that does not change the potential for reconciliation.

God is for marriage. He has been since the beginning of time since he created it. Anybody who has said "I do" may have made some poor decisions, but that does not cancel out the potential of God in making the worst marriage into something wonderful. Likewise, anyone who has made mistakes and messed up their marriage can still reach for the standard of marriage that God has.

No one is beyond God and God is still into working miracles.

God wants to heal your marriage and build it into something that brings Him glory. Are you ready to look into marriage the way God intended?

What do you need to do in response to this lesson?

Oh, by the way, for those that are looking for the answers to the quiz – they can be found throughout the study. I was not going to make it that easy!