

PRIESTING YOUR HOME (Part 2) (Eph. 5:21-32)

~Last week we talked about what it means to step into the role of Prophet, Priest, and King in your home.

A. A Prophet represents God to the people.

~It is our duty to represent God to our family.

~In our actions, words, and deeds we must become a representative of God—making His love, grace, and mercy KNOWN to them every day.

B. A Priest represents the people to God.

~We have a unique opportunity and responsibility to go before the Lord in PRAYER on behalf of our families.

~Prayer is the greatest GIFT we can give our family....and our prayers allows God to release His greatest gifts into our families lives.

~As we engage in Prayer we are TAKING our family to God daily...and if we take them to God daily, He will be faithful to cover, protect, and bless them.

C. A King Provides and Protects those of His house.

~Most men want to be the king of their castle, but until they are willing to serve as priest, and until they are Priests they are not worthy to be king.

~A king takes responsibility for the welfare of his people. He provides both justice and mercy for them.

~The stark reality that we as Men of God must come to is that Satan desires to attack and destroy your family.

(Mark 3:27, Matthew 12:29) “No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, **except he will first bind the strong man**; and then he will spoil his house.”

~The adversary attacks a family by attacking a Man—when the man is bound, the family becomes exposed.

~God has given men the ‘responsibility’ of being the HEAD of the home.

~I stress the word “responsibility” there. It isn't that men have special privileges. It's that they have a job to do, which they will answer to God for.

~In a family, the **GOAL** is serving God and raising our children to serve God...and the adversary will do anything to keep us from obtaining that goal.

~God has called Men to **LEAD** their families.

There are four requirements to be a leader:

- 1. A leader must have a vision.**
- 2. A leader must make decisions.**
- 3. A leader must be responsible.**
- 4. A leader must be out in front.**

1. There is no doubt that God's HIGHEST and BEST is revealed to us by His institution of Marriage and the Family. The Family was God's FIRST INSTITUTION.

~Our Fundamental problem is that for the first time in history we are confronted with the need to re-define the meaning of the terms **marriage** and **family**.

~The **FAMILY** is undeniably **UNDER SIEGE**—the Divine foundations of these institutions of marriage and family have come under massive attack.

~Until we understand the dynamic of God's "original intent"—and **how our RELATIONSHIP with Him reveals how our marriage and family should look**, we will always fall short of having the kinds of marriages and the kind of families that give Him Glory.

1. Marriage and Family—Are God's Idea

~Where there is anything that's **DESIGNED**, there is a designer. Whether it's a truck, building or train — or even a marriage and a family — there is always a mastermind behind the masterpiece.

1.) Marriage is created out of divine ORDER.

~Marriage did not begin in the heart or mind of a man—it was instituted by God Himself.

~Coming **FROM** God, it was designed with great **ORDER**. That order must be understood.

(3 ways to get married—Flesh, Soul, Spirit)

2.) Marriage is based on a covenant RELATIONSHIP.

~Covenant is giving and receiving, and it is **BINDING**.

~Covenant isn't a light thing...and this covenant is witnessed by God Himself.

3.) Marriage REFLECTS our relationship with God.

~We will dive into this more deeply—but it is important to understand that God MODELS the marriage covenant in the relationship that He has with His Church.

A. The Divine Order to Marriage

~Marriage and Family is the full expression and design of God's image in human beings.

~Man's giving in marriage is a mirror image of his LOVE relationship to, covenant with, and becoming One with God himself—along with the power and commission to “CREATE” more individuals in Christ's likeness (In marriage it is children—In His relationship with the Church it is converts of salvation).

~This is a beautiful mirror image—BUT when our relationship with God is marred it is likely that our marriage relationship will be unable to sustain a healthy order.

In (**Gen 2:8, 21, 22**) we read: “And the Lord God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.’ . . . So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, He took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib (side) he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.”

a. The Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) is a family, and thus man in God's image must be made a family as well.

~Therefore a man cannot completely realize the essence of his existence until he learns to exist WITH someone and FOR someone.

~We see from Genesis 1 and 2 that God created woman from the side of man so that the man would not be alone.

~From the teaching of the New Testament, we also discover that He created the Church from the side of the second Adam—Christ—for the same reason—for intimate fellowship. (He has always had this DESIRE for Family and fellowship)

b. Back in the Genesis account, we note that the newly created Eve was Adam—his very flesh and bone, and for that reason, the Bible says, Adam called her woman, and, for that reason a man is to leave mother and father and be united to his wife to become one flesh (Gen. 2:24).

~For **WHAT REASON** is a man to marry a wife?

~Because woman was originally a constituent part of man, she must return to become one with him again, so that the full expression and design of God's image in human beings can be revealed.

~Here we have another parallel between the Old Testament type and the New Testament fulfillment. **Eve was to reunite with her source and become one with him—just as we are with Christ, as He prayed in John 17.**

~The marital union and covenant, in all its dimensions, is meant to gloriously reveal the very image of God in ways that we can only begin to understand.

c. Together and rightly ordered, their united differences ignite the power and glory of creation itself, which is the consummate activity of God from the beginning. (When we are rightly ordered in divine covenant—we are capable of CREATION!!! Which again is revealing of God Himself)

d. So God does a two-stage creation of man.

~First he makes the full orb'd being (Adam, which in the Hebrew means, mankind).

~Then in phase two, God removes woman from Adam's side and makes Eve a separate being, though of Adam's substance, designed to ultimately reunite to her source through the mystery of Holy Matrimony.

~And the spark, the power of that union is meant to gloriously reveal the very image of God to all the company of heaven and earth. **That is why Satan fights tooth and nail to pervert and distort rightly ordered human sexuality, holy matrimony, the family, and fatherhood in particular....because when it is rightly ordered it REVEALS and GLORIFIES God!**

~In fact, the amount of time and effort that Satan expends to destroy the image of God reflected in Family, marriage, fatherhood and human sexuality is a barometer of just how incredibly important it is to God's plan and the expression of His glory.

2. Covenant is the HEART of the Marriage Mystery.

~Covenant is the fundamental tool that God has designed to order His relationship with mankind.

~Part of the understanding of the “Why?” of this mystery can be found in the understanding of covenant, which is the VEHICLE by which a man and a woman are to establish the lifelong, faithful relationship.

~Covenant is also the fundamental tool that God has designed to construct and order His relationship with man.

A. A covenant is an EXCHANGE OF PERSONS, as opposed to a contract, which is an exchange of promises.

~In covenant, LIVES are exchanged. We are GIVING our and receiving another.

~Covenants are established by making an **oath**—an oath that creates kinship between the two who are making the covenant.

~If you don't have an oath, you don't have a covenant.

B. Christ strikes a covenant with us at our salvation—one that is stronger than blood, one that establishes a divine, everlasting kinship bond.

~In making covenant with Him, God adopts us into His family and treats us as heirs to the family fortune.

There are 3 words for “Oath:”

1. The Hebrew word for “oath” is “shevah,” meaning “to seven oneself” (In Gen 21:27-31, Abraham makes a treaty with Abimelech using seven ewe lambs, and they called the place “Beersheva,” which means, “the place of the oath” or “the well of the sevens.”)

2. Another Hebrew word for oath is “I raise my hand” (Deut 32:40).

~When we raise our hands in worship, for example, we are swearing an oath.

~When in a court of Law—we are asked to raise our right hand and make an oath....EVERYTHING that is said following that is said UNDER OATH.

3. Another Hebrew term is “to put oneself under a curse” in order to receive God's blessing.

~We are therefore placing ourselves under a curse, to be damned if we don't keep our part of the oath.

~Only in Christianity does God bind Himself to man by swearing an oath. God put Himself under a curse if He didn't keep the terms of the covenant to Abraham and his seed.

~Since we did not keep our part of the covenant, **God became man and became a curse for us in order to make us His covenant family.....WOW!!!**

C. We have married Christ in word but have never consummated the marriage by giving ourselves to Him with the trust and abandon that we were designed to give.

~Rather than giving our all to Him, rather than submitting to the source of our life with joyful obedience, we have grumbled and complained and questioned Him at every turn in the road.

~We have rejected the call to love, which is a call to **sacrificially give ourselves to Him** just as He has sacrificially given Himself to us.

~We have defiled the Spiritual marriage bed with other gods, with other idols. We have remained fixed on ourselves, offering only periodic, emotion laden gestures of love that only tease but never deliver.

~**Christ has made promises and sworn and faithfully executed oaths to bind Himself to us and to bind evil and cast it off, if we will simply be true to Him in ways that are real.**

3. Reflecting Our Relationship With God

~**We need to live our lives knowing that we have been created for intimate union with God.**

~We, as born again believers, need to live our lives in the knowledge of the fact that God has married us, both corporately, as the Body of Christ, and individually, as sons and daughters who He loves with such intensity that **He was willing to let evil men torture Him on a Cross in order to win our hearts.**

~We need to live our lives in the knowledge that, in fact, the end for which we have been created is just such an intimate union with God—that our marriage with God is designed to kick in with all cylinders when we give our lives in covenant commitment to Him at the point of our new birth—and that what God hath joined to Himself, no man can put asunder. This is one of the great mysteries of God. It is for this that we were born and that Christ died and rose again.

(Eph. 5:21-32) “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body.

For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.

This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.”

~In this verse, Paul delivers the final brilliant strokes and focal points of his epistle, whose thematic roots go all the way back to the first chapter.

~Paul shockingly and brilliantly rips the veil that had hidden the answer to the mystery of the supreme purpose and end for God having saved us, as well as the mysteries behind God having made us male and female, sexual beings, called into faithful, monogamous, heterosexual relationships that were to personify the virtue of sacrificial love.

~This is the overarching theme and teaching of the Book of Ephesians—the great and high calling of the believer, the primary reason for creating and redeeming mankind.

~This is it...God wants to marry us!

~He wants us to be His lawfully wedded wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward and forever more. **And in the Upper Room, with a towel wrapped around Him and a basin of water in front of Him, God incarnate knelt down to propose marriage. And what God hath brought together, let no one put asunder!**

~And this is the same PASSION that we are to approach our own marriages and our families!

~And so we see why Satan is so intent in defacing and destroying human sexuality and marriage. He is trying to mock God. He is trying to mar the very image of God expressed on this earth through the marital bond.

~He is trying to rob God of His deepest and most passionate intention—that of marital union with man—because if he can destroy the beauty of the earthly bond, he can destroy in us any desire for the heavenly bond.

~You and I, and every believer, were created to live in marital union with God, both now and in the age to come.

~Everything about a healthy marital union on this earthly plane has been designed by God to be a **reflection** of the interaction that we are meant to have with God Himself.

4. God's Design for Marriage

~We must find the keys to making our marriages flourish — just as God designed.

~Truth is, no relationship comes with a lifetime guarantee.

A. We must begin with APPLYING “Biblical principles” to marriage--This will ensure that we will begin with a stronger foundation.

B. What if your relationship isn't as much about you and your spouse as it is about you and God?

~Instead of asking why we have struggles in the first place--the more important issue is how we deal with them.

~How can we use the challenges, joys, struggles and celebrations of marriage to draw closer to God? What if God designed marriage to make us both happy *and* holy?

~**Holiness is achieved by a series of MORALLY CORRECT DECISIONS.**

5. Viewing Marriage Realistically

~We have to stop asking of marriage what God never designed it to give — perfect happiness, conflict-free living, and idolatrous obsession.

~We must appreciate what God designed marriage to provide: 1.) partnership, 2.) spiritual intimacy and 3.) the ability to pursue God — together.

A. The most common misconception Christians have about marriage—Finding a 'soul mate' or someone who will 'complete' us.

~The problem with looking to another human to complete us is that, spiritually speaking, it's idolatry.

~**We are to find our fulfillment and purpose in God . . .** and if we expect our spouse to be 'God' to us, he or she will fail every day. No person can live up to such expectations.

~Everyone has bad days, yells at his or her spouse, or is downright selfish. Despite these imperfections, God created the husband and wife to steer each other in His direction.

(The GOOD and the BAD of this intimate God centered relationship is to POINT US TOWARD HIM!!!)

~ALL OF THESE DIFFICULTIES AND DISSAPOINTMENTS ALLOW US TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROCESS OF HOLINESS! (Entering into the process of making consistent morally correct decisions)

B. God designed an other-centered union for a me-centered world. God isn't against HAPPINESS—but marriage promotes higher VALUES. There is a HIGHER PURPOSE at work!

~God created marriage as a loyal partnership between one man and one woman.

~Marriage is the firmest foundation for building a family.

~God designed sexual expression to help married couples build intimacy.

~Marriage mirrors God's covenant relationship with His people.

C. If HAPPINESS is our primary goal, we'll get a divorce as soon as happiness seems to wane.

~If receiving love is our primary goal, we'll dump our spouse as soon as they seem to be less attentive.

~But if we marry for the glory of God, to model His love and commitment to our children, and to reveal His witness to the world, divorce makes no sense.

D. Strengthening a floundering relationship —or even encourage a healthy one will be made possible by the following tips:

1. Focus on your spouse's strengths rather than their weaknesses.
2. Encourage rather than criticize.
3. Pray for your spouse instead of gossiping about them.
4. Learn and live what Christ teaches about relating to and loving others.

6. Reclaiming the Heart of Marriage

~God calls us to a renewed life, but it still takes patience, sacrifice, discipline and compassion.

(Genesis 1:26,27, NIV) “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.”

~How often have husbands and wives considered the truth that each bears the image and likeness of God? More important, how many realize they reflect God's image and likeness at least as much, if not more in their one-flesh union than each does separately?

~By pointing us back to the beginning, Jesus wanted us to understand this vital revelation: God created humans for intimate unions that model the intimate union shared by members of the Triune God.

~He said, “Let US make man in OUR image and likeness.”

~God's great gift to His children was the ability to share in the divine love existing before time.

A. We must understand that the design that was twisted and shattered when Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden.

~When Adam and Eve sinned, they endured “painful toil” working the cursed ground of “thorns and thistles” **(Genesis 3:17-19, NIV)**.

~Our hearts have also suffered the devastation of the Fall. We daily battle the thorns and thistles—pride, bitterness, lust, greed, envy—that threaten to choke our fragile stirrings of love.

B. This makes marriage difficult. We often see our spouse as the enemy, rather than an extension of ourselves.

~Our one-flesh union may be lacking all emotional, mental, and spiritual aspects and be relegated to quick couplings born of frustration or desperation. And we wonder where God is in all of this.

~After directing us back to the beginning, Jesus provided a way for us to return to God's design for our lives and marriages.

~He finished His atonement for our sins on the cross and **promised a new life in Him**.

~The Bible teaches that if we have been baptized into His death, we are also baptized into His new life **(Romans 6:3-4, NIV)**.

~This is our hope and His promise. **The life God gives is one restored, redeemed, and transformed.**

~This is not some hyper-spiritualized pipe dream. God calls us to a renewed life, **but it still takes patience, sacrifice, discipline, and compassion.**

~But God is with us every step of the way, working through His Spirit to restore everything that has been damaged.

~Listen for God's call to this transformed life and hold tight to the promise of the One who said, **“Behold, I am making all things new.”**

7. ENTERING INTO “THE DANCE”

~Many couples find themselves in this quandary. For the most part, their marriages are intact, and their lives are fairly well managed. They may not be facing any major relational tension, but the typical rigors and stresses of life's responsibilities leave them somewhat dull of heart, longing for deeper connection and intimacy.

~Growth in intimacy and connection is possible! Marriages are not predestined to devolve into mere social contracts in which a husband and wife simply fulfill roles and responsibilities while passion and romance become inevitable casualties. A basic understanding of God, and how He created humans, will help develop deeper intimacy in marriage.

A. When we learn that God, Who is love, created humans to exist in intimate relationship with Him and one another, we are in a better position to develop our relationships.

~By allowing God, the ultimate and infinite source of authentic love, to flow through us, we find ourselves loving each other in divine ways. We begin to experience marriage more as a “sacred dance” than a human contract.

B. God is the Source of Authentic Love.

~Though in marriage we pledge to love one another through the fluctuations of life, selfishness is our natural tendency. We tend to pull into ourselves and stand in critical judgment of others, especially our spouse. Attempting to find true love—a love that never fails—within our human selves is futile.

~However, God has called husbands and wives to serve as unique vessels of *His* love for the other.

~Once we begin to realize that it is God's infinite, authentic love **poured through us into the other**, an amazing shift occurs. As we receive God's love poured into our hearts, then that love—a **love that never fails**—overflows into others around us, especially our spouse.

C. Embrace Differences.

~The differences between husband and wife are intended by God to bring unique blessings into the other's life (Not to cause dispute and ultimate fall out).

~The first step in reducing tension brought on by our peculiar personality traits, then, is to accept them as a gift from God. By first expressing genuine appreciation for the other's uniqueness, we can then speak to the issues brought on by them.

~When we come to understand God, ourselves, our spouse, and how it is supposed to FIT TOGETHER in the will of God...we can begin to build the FOUNDATION in our home that cannot be destroyed!