Another picture of marriage

NZCN | Note M14-03
We’re confused about marriage. We want ceremonies with vows “till death parts us”, yet every year half as many divorce as marry.

How do you picture “marriage”?
Weddings, like Hollywood productions, present the dream of perfect couples, it’s all about love and fulfillment. But that Hollywood self-fulfilment picture of marriage isn’t true.
The foundation for marriage is summed up at the very beginning of the Bible, in Genesis 2. “For this reason” refers back to the story in Genesis 2; of how God made a human being, planted a wonderful garden and put the human there to cultivate and care for it. God also recognised that it is not good for man to be alone so He made a suitable helper for him. Let’s examine what that means:

- **a helper** is not subordinate. In the Old Testament, almost always the strong “help” the weak. This speaks of our human need for each other.

- **suitable** implies both “like” and “appropriate”

Animals didn’t fit the need... So God made a woman who really was: “bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh” - a helper who matches.

In Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, chapter 5 deals extensively with marriage and specifically quotes Genesis chapter 2. He goes on to say: “This is a profound mystery - I am talking about Christ and the church.”

That’s the Creator’s plan. Genesis 2 tells us that woman and man were “made for each other”, but Genesis 1, telling of the creation of humans, talks about the image of God.

**“So God created humanity in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”** - Genesis 1:2

Love and partnership between man and woman echoes the love within the Godhead. We are to love our wives or husbands as God loved us, but we are also to love and share as God does!

**Marriage is a spiritual discipline**

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“This is a profound mystery - I am talking about Christ and the church.”

– Ephesians 5:32

Marriage echoes God’s love for us in Christ. In marriage we should love as God loves us. Marriage is a “spiritual discipline”. Seth’s dad expressed deep truths about God’s intentions for marriage.

“Marriage isn’t for you. It’s not about you. Marriage is about the person you married.”

**Marriage can only work with forgiveness and grace**

- between spouses.

**Plan:**

- **If you are thinking of marriage:** Are you asking “Is marriage for you”, or are you ready to live for your future spouse and children?

- **If you are married:** Are you behaving as if the marriage was “for you”? How can you change that?

- **If you prepare people for marriage:** How do you help people understand what marriage really is, and to aim for the real thing?