

**“God’s Original Design”**

**Text: Psalm 32:8 and other passages**

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Park Boulevard Presbyterian Church ([www.pbpc.org](http://www.pbpc.org))

Oakland, California

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We’re starting a new series on marriage this week. We’re going to look at God’s design for your marriage and how God wants to build your marriage.

- The problem with marriage is that most marriages start off as an ideal, then they become an ordeal, and pretty soon you’re looking for a new deal!

I realize that we have all kinds of needs represented here today:

- Some of you have **not been married very long**.
- Some of you have been **divorced**.
- Some of you are **separated** right now.
- Some of you have **never been married**.
- Some of you would **love to get married**.
- Some of you have a **good marriage**, but you’re under stress right now.
- There are many different needs. I can say confidently, without any doubt, that **God has a specific word** for every person here.

I have three goals in this series:

1. This series is going to encourage you if your marriage is hurting.
2. I want to convince you that it is possible to have a great marriage.
3. I want to challenge you to correct some of the things in marriage that are causing you problems.

This morning we’re just going to have an overview and look at God’s Original Design. That’s why we go back to the very first book of the Bible. I’m going to make some brief comments and then outline some steps for you as we begin this journey together.

**Read Genesis 2:15-25**

**Pray!**

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Adam was put in the Garden of Eden and it was a perfect environment. He had no need.

- Vs. 18 – Man’s oldest problem is loneliness. God never meant for anybody to be lonely.
- One of the purposes of marriage is partnership. It prevents loneliness.

So God made Adam a wife. In verse 21 it says, *“So the Lord caused the man to fall into a deep sleep and while he was sleeping he took one of the man’s ribs and he closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord made woman with the rib he had taken out of man and he brought her to the man and the man said, ‘This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh...’”*

- Classic reaction. Woman had no marks or defects—gorgeous. Hebrew description of “This is now...” is an exclamation: Wow! Eureka! This is it! You’re the only girl in the world for me (literally)!
- Every marriage starts off that way. But what happens? Great anticipation falls away. What makes the Wow! Turn to Ow! Why is there turnabout?

One of the key verses in the Bible is verse 24 in regards to marriage.

- It’s mentioned five times in the Bible so you know it’s important. One of these is when Jesus teaches about marriage from this passage in Matthew 19.
- God’s blueprint for marriage – 23 words and the foundation for every good marriage is found in this.
- God designed marriage. God thought it up and designed it for your happiness, not your hurt.
- *“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and they will become one flesh.”*
- In this verse, God says in order to have a marriage that really works there are some things you need to hold onto and there are some things you need to let go of. He says don’t drag your past into your present relationship.

This morning I want to give you three things from Scripture that God says you need to give up if you’re going to have the kind of exciting, fulfilling, happy marriage that God always meant for you to have in the first place.

## 1. LET GO OF PARENTS.

- A. This is the obvious one. *“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother.”* There is a leaving to be done. This is true for the women too. You need to leave your parents. Let go of them.
  1. This is more than just geographically. God is talking about leaving psychologically. There is a breakthrough. Leaving literally means to break your dependence. It’s to cut the emotional umbilical cord. Your relationship with your parents changes the moment you’re married. No doubt about it. God says it.
- B. This is a problem over and over with people who come for marriage counseling. A spouse will never make a decision without first calling up Mommy and Daddy. Even though they are already in their 40’s and 50’s. Or every single time – a day off, a holiday – they always go home and they don’t build any traditions themselves in their own marriage. Or any time there’s a problem they call their parents.

1. I heard of the father who said to his daughter who was getting married, "Once you get married we will always love you. We will always care for you. You will always be our daughter. We will always pray for you. But if you have a problem in your marriage, you can never come home – move back in." Why? She didn't have any place to go so it forced the married couple to work it out; to work on their problems.
- C. What is God saying? He's saying that your partner should not have to compete with your parents. It's unrealistic. It puts all kinds of pressure on a marriage and it makes wives feel insecure and it makes husbands feel inadequate. So let go of parents.

## 2. LET GO OF OTHER PEOPLE IN YOUR PAST.

- A. Let go of other people, other relationships, other friend or brothers or sisters – other people you've held on to. Maybe a former boyfriend or girlfriend. Maybe a former spouse. Let go of other people in your past.
- B. If you don't let go of other people, you will fall into the trap of comparison. Old relationships all of a sudden start looking better. When things start going wrong in your marriage you start thinking, "If only he/she were like..." "If only I hadn't broken off that relationship. Maybe I should have married that person." We have selective forgetting and we tend to forget the problems in those relationships and why we ended them in the first place.
  1. This is the Grass is Greener Myth. Frank Freed said, "*The grass is not greener on that side of the fence. And the grass is not greener on this side of the fence. **The grass is greener where you water it.***" What you need to do is stop comparing and start cultivating. Water your own relationship and watch it grow, watch it develop, watch it expand and become all that God wants it to be.
- C. What God is saying here is that marriage is an exclusive relationship. Marriage takes priority over everything else except your relationship to God. Other relationships must take second place, even ones in the past.
- D. It's like the woman who went through four marriages. First she married a millionaire. Then she married a film producer. Then she married a butler. Then she married a funeral director. Somebody asked her why. She said, "I married one for the money, two for the show, three to get ready and four to go!"

### 3. LET GO OF PROBLEMS.

A. Let go of the problems from your past. Your marriage is going to have enough problems on its own. Most people are totally unaware of the excess baggage they bring into a relationship when they get married. There are three kinds of past problems you don't need to hold onto.

**1. You need to let go of grudges.** Some of you are still allowing people who've hurt you in your past to hurt you today and that's dumb. Your past is over. It's finished. God says, "Let go of it!"

**2. Let go of grief.** Grief is normal but when you hold onto it, it becomes destructive and it starts to eat away at you and you start saying, "I'll never be happy again, and no matter what my husband does, I am unpleasable." "No matter what my wife does, she can never make me happy because I will grieve the rest of my life."

- You have to accept what cannot be changed and **you have to focus on what's left, not what is lost.**

**3. Give up your guilt.** Many, many marriages die from secret guilt. "If my spouse ever found out I would die!" So as a result, I build a wall to prevent my mate from knowing me because they might just find out that secret skeleton in the closet. I never let them get close. Guilt can destroy marriages.

- Margaret & I
- There's only one solution for guilt. Confession. Forgiveness. We ask forgiveness from God. We accept forgiveness from God. And then we offer forgiveness to those who've hurt us. 1 John 1:9, "*If we confess our sins to God, God promises to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*"

**That's the letting go part; the three things to give up. Now here's the hanging on part. "A man will leave his father and mother and cleave or be united to his wife."**

- A. The word "cleave" is the word "be united". In Hebrew it literally means to glue together, to paste together, to adhere to. It means to stick, to super glue. With super glue the bond becomes stronger than the two pieces you glued together. That's what marriage is to be.
- B. To cleave is an act of commitment. It means to say "I do". The problem with marriages is that so many people who say "I do" – don't. Instead of marrying for better and for worse, people ought to just marry for good. "I do" -- a commitment.
- C. What is God saying? God is saying good marriages are a result of choices and commitments you make.
- D. Let me give you two commitments that I have found to be key for saving a marriage.

1. The first commitment is what I think “cleaving” means – we will never, never, never divorce.
    - Margaret & I – first seven years of marriage.
    - Some of you are already divorced. I’m not talking about your past. I’m talking about if you’re in a relationship now, or if you ever plan to be in a relationship. Forget the past. It’s over. I’m talking about right now. Make a commitment: If I ever marry again or if I’m married right now, I will not divorce.
  2. The other commitment is this: Do whatever it takes and whatever it costs for as long as it takes to make your marriage work. That’s what it means to cleave.
    - Margaret & I – Counseling
- E. You leave and you cleave. Leaving and cleaving are the process. The results are one flesh. *“A man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and they will become one flesh.”*
1. He’s talking about a blending of two lives. He’s talking about more than just sex, although that is a very important part of it. What He’s talking about here is total intimacy.
  2. Becoming one flesh does not happen overnight. You can have a physical relationship overnight but to become one flesh -- it says you become one flesh. That’s means it’s a process, an ongoing thing. It just doesn’t happen. It happens through the process of leaving and cleaving.

Some statistics. In a *Marriage and Divorce* magazine, they gave these statistics:

- Right now in the United States approximately two out of every three marriages ends in divorce. Not very good odds.
- However, in a relationship where the people were married in a church, the divorce rate is one out of fifty.
- In a marriage where they’re married in a church, they attend every Sunday, and they pray and read the Bible together, the divorce rate is one out of 1105.
- That’s the difference Jesus Christ makes in a marriage. It may be a cliché, but it is true that the family that prays together, stays together.
- That’s not all you need. But it is true that a family that prays together, stays together.

Prayer:

Marriage begins and continues with commitment. I challenge you to make two simple commitments in your heart. First, commit your life to Jesus Christ.

**“Jesus Christ, I need your help in my marriage and my life. Jesus Christ, come into my life and help me please. Save my marriage and my life.”**

If you’ve prayed that you will have a new sense of power that you’ve never known about that will help you make the changes you know you need to make. Commit you life to Christ.

Number two, commit yourself to your spouse. Would you right now in your heart determine to cleave? Would you say, **“I will eliminate the possibility of divorce. If I’m married now, if I ever marry in the future, I will not marry with the option of divorce.”** Some of you even now with your marriage under tension need to say, **“I will do whatever it takes or costs to make it work.”** If you make those kinds of commitments in your life, you are on your way to total intimacy.

(PAUSE)

**“Heavenly Father, thank You for Your word that it is practical, it applies to every area of our lives, it helps us where we’re hurting. Thank You for instructing us this morning. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.”**