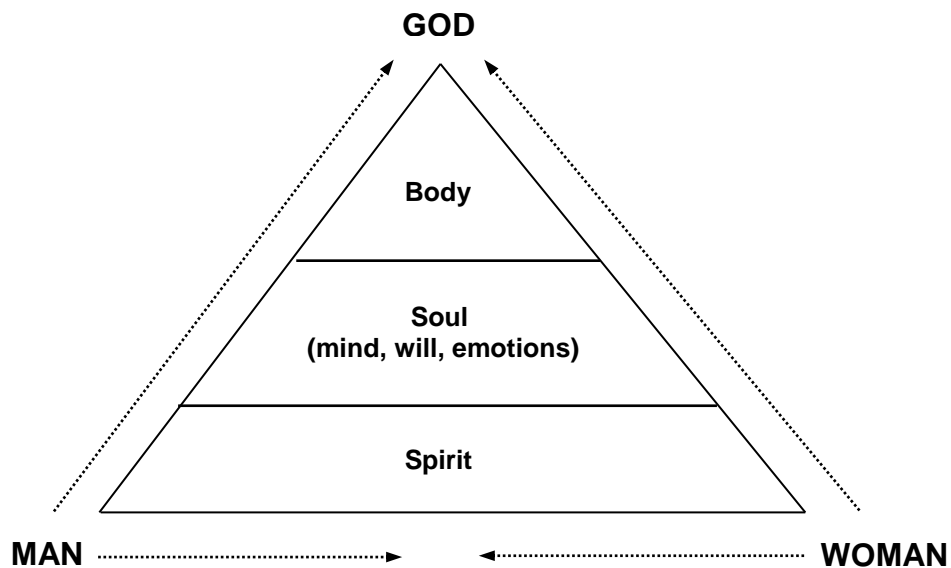


Introduction: Why do so many of our “dreams” for marriage
end in nightmares?

God's design for marriage: “The blueprint”

Genesis 1 & 2



God's "game-plan" for marriage: "The process"

For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

Genesis 2:24

1. "For this cause. . ."

- response to God = obedience

2. "A man shall leave his father and mother. . ."

- response to parents = independence
- key = emotional and financial detachment
- no loss of respect, but shift in loyalty

3. "And shall cleave to his wife. . ."

- response to our spouse = allegiance, loyalty
- recognition of my need for my spouse
- decision making with us in focus
- key = requires death-blow to self

4. "Shall become one flesh. . ."

- response to life's pressures and demands
- a dynamic process of "inseparable, life-long commitment and fidelity to one another"
- each must nourish his/her own flesh of which your spouse is now a part
- involves progressive intimacy of our spirits, our souls (mind, will, emotions) and our bodies

God's "desire" for marriage: "The reward"

And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

Genesis 2:25

On a scale of 1 to 5 rate the following: (1 = strongly disagree / 5 = strongly agree)

1. Evidence of **spiritual** intimacy

- _____ My spouse and I often tend to agree in many of the important issues concerning values and beliefs.
- _____ We seem to practice honest confession followed by genuine forgiveness when one of us has hurt the other.
- _____ As a couple, our spiritual closeness through prayer or sharing Scripture insights is quite good.

2. Evidence of **emotional** intimacy

- _____ I remember special times when my spouse and I shared strong emotions, like grief, sadness, joy, or brokenness.
- _____ We seem to be good at giving one another undivided attention when listening or talking.
- _____ Verbalizing my needs and desires concerning our relationship to my spouse would be normal for me.

3. Evidence of **physical** intimacy

- _____ We seem to prioritize frequent times of quality talking and having dates together.
- _____ I'm comfortable communicating my sexual desires and preferences to my spouse.
- _____ I'm very satisfied with my spouse's sensitivity in meeting my sexual needs.

God's purpose for marriage: "The impact"

1. _____ and _____
_____ Genesis 1:26-28
Proverbs 5:18-20
2. _____ Intimacy Genesis 2:18, 25
3. _____ Impact Ephesians 5:22-33

Discussion Questions: For those who are married

1. List the top two to three things that initially attracted you to your mate (before you were married).
2. Describe the most memorable or meaningful "date" or experience you shared with your mate prior to marriage.
3. Share one "personal snapshot" from your honeymoon that you still cherish to this day.
4. **For those with children:** Describe how the birth of your first child together made you feel about your mate, life, and God.
5. Share one thing that your mate has accomplished that made you very proud of him/her.

Discussion Questions: For those who are single

1. List three couple's marriages that you admire and tell why.
2. What "dynamics" in those relationships best explain the quality of their marriage?
3. List the top three to four things one should look for in the opposite sex to have a lasting marriage in light of today's message.
4. Discuss the phrase "having a great marriage isn't so much about finding the right person as it is becoming the right person."