

# Marriage & Family:

## God's Creation of Family

### INTRODUCTION

- A. There are problems any time we begin to talk about marriage & family, and we'll think about several of those problems as we go through this course.
- B. One of the main problems is the question about how to define family.
  - 1. Merriam-Webster defines family like this:
    - a. "A group of individuals living under one roof and usually under one head."
    - b. "A group of persons of common ancestry."
    - c. "The basic unit in society traditionally consisting of two parents rearing their children, *also: any of various social units differing from but regarded as equivalent to the traditional family.*"
  - 2. I generally don't like defining words like this one from an English dictionary.
    - a. I don't like doing that because my thinking is: "If the Bible is going to be our authority, then we need to allow the Bible to define the word."
    - b. I think we obviously see the problems in defining the word "family" from Merriam-Webster from a biblical perspective.
      - 1) The first definition—"A group of individuals living under one roof and usually under one head"—poses myriad problems for us Christians.
        - a) What about a woman who has a husband and children who "falls in love" with a co-worker and leaves her husband and children and forms a new household with that co-worker? Are those two people really a family?
        - b) What about a lady who decides to get pregnant from artificial insemination? Are she and that child truly a family?
        - c) What about two homosexual men who are living together? Are they a family? What if they go and adopt a child or find a surrogate mother? If a child enters the picture, do they become a family?
        - d) What about a man and woman who simply live together? Are they a family?
        - e) What about roommates living together in college? Are they a family?
      - 2) The second definition—"A group of persons of common ancestry"—really doesn't pose any moral problems. However, it does pose a problem as we think about families.
        - a) We Christians affirm that we all have common ancestry.
          - i. Eve is the mother of all people: "Adam named his wife Eve [which probably means "living"], because she would become the mother of all the living" (Gn 3:20).
          - ii. The Great Flood destroyed all living things except those on the ark. Noah and his family are likewise the ancestors of all of us: "God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth" (Gn 9:1).
        - b) Each of us, therefore, not only has a common ancestry, but we can often find that we are related to most of the people we know. I've done some genealogical research and have found some interesting data:
          - i. My wife & I—even though we are from different parts of Kentucky and never met until we were both in our twenties—are 10<sup>th</sup> cousins 10 times removed.
          - ii. I have traced ancestry and found the following people in a branch of my family tree: Queen Elizabeth II, George Washington, Jimmy Carter, Princess Diana, Alexander the Great, & Charlemagne. It is believed that every person of European descent in this country is descended from Charlemagne.
          - iii. I even discovered that my wife is a very distant cousin of the elders' wives

where I preach.

- c) The question is: “Are these individuals really a ‘family’?”
- c. The third definition given—“The basic unit of society traditionally consisting of two parents rearing their children”—sounds good at first.
  - 1) This is where we will spend the majority of our time this semester, but even the traditional family—two parents rearing their children—poses a problem from a Christian viewpoint.
    - a) It poses a problem because there are times when because of no immorality it is not possible to have two parents raising their children.
    - b) Sometimes similar situations occur because of the unchristian actions of just one spouse—perhaps a spouse commits adultery or abuses alcohol or has a terrible temper he or she takes out on the children.
  - 2) The third definition also poses a problem, for it adds the following: “any of various social units differing from but regarded as equivalent to the traditional family.” Again, this opens the door to people living in immorality having the same status as those living according to biblical principles.
3. How does the Bible define “family”?
  - a. At times, “family” does refer to a group of people with a common ancestry.
    - 1) When the Israelites were unable to conquer Ai because Achan had taken spoil from Jericho, we read that the LORD told Joshua: “In the morning, present yourselves tribe by tribe. The tribe that the LORD takes shall come forward clan by clan; the clan that the LORD takes shall come forward family by family; and the family that the LORD takes shall come forward man by man. He who is caught with the devoted things shall be destroyed by fire, along with all that belongs to him. He has violated the covenant of the LORD and has done a disgraceful thing in Israel! Early the next morning Joshua had Israel come forward by tribes, and Judah was taken. The clans of Judah came forward, and he took the Zerahites. He had the clan of the Zerahites come forward by families, and Zimri was taken. Joshua had his family come forward man by man, and Achan son of Carmi, the son of Zimri, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken” (Jos 7:14-18).
    - 2) Do notice, however, that family doesn't include all people of common ancestry, but simply from grandfather to grandson.
  - b. In the narrative of Gideon, “family” is generally described much more closely to what we think of as the traditional “family.”
    - 1) Jud 6:15: “But Lord,’ Gideon asked, 'How can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.’”
    - 2) “That same night the LORD said to him, 'Take the second bull from your father's herd, the one seven years old. Tear down your father's altar to Baal and cut down the Asherah pole beside it. Then build a proper kind of altar to the LORD your God on the top of this height. Using the wood of the Asherah pole that you cut down, offer the second bull as a burnt offering.’ So Gideon took ten of his servants and did as the LORD told him. But because he was afraid of his family and the men of the town, he did it at night rather than in the daytime” (Jud 6:25-27). Notice the close connection between *family* and *father*.
  - c. Scripture also uses the term “family” to refer to a group of people living together under one roof: “The ark of God remained with the family of Obed-Edom in his house for three months, and the LORD blessed his household and everything he had” (1 Chr 13:14)—Notice the close connection between “family” and “household.”
  - d. We must conclude that while the term “family” occurs regularly in the OT and once in the NT—the term occurs 123 in the KJV, only the occurrence in Eph 3:15 is outside the OT—there is no definition of “family” given in the Scriptures.
  - e. While we don't have a definition of “family” in the Bible, we do have clear directives concerning marriage, the interaction between husbands and wives, children, and their interaction with their parents and parents' interaction with their children.
- C. Another problem we have in thinking about “family” is that people, even Christians, think of “family”

in different terms.

1. The only experience we have when we marry is our family of origin.
    - a. If our mother always had supper on the table when our father came home or our father always brought home roses on Friday, it's easy to see how we expect the same when we get married.
    - b. On the other hand, if our father verbally abused our mother and our mother regularly gave our father the silent treatment, that's likely what we'll expect when we get married.
  2. Research has shown that adolescents and young adults develop expectations for family life from television, and that these expectations are associated with the degree of satisfaction they experience in their families.(2)
  3. Previous relationships also teach us what to expect from marriage.(2) What friends and former dating partners wanted or needed in a relationship may train us to think that everyone in a marriage acts that way.
- D. Most of our expectations in marriage center on three areas:(3)
1. Boundaries: Where does the line around the couple go? Who is in it, and who is out of it? Do both partners agree on how much interference will be tolerated by relatives and friends? How many and what kind of activities will you each do without the other partner?
  2. Investment: How much time and effort does each partner feel the other should be putting into the relationship? What expressions of caring do partners prefer? Gifts? Physical touch? Words of affirmation? Acts of service? Quality time? Are your expressions of love meeting the receiver's needs and not just your needs?
  3. Control and Power: Is power shared? How? Who makes the decisions? Do both partners feel they have influence in the decision-making process? How do you communicate about important issues?
- E. Therefore, we need to do four things about expectations in marriage:
1. Be aware of what you expect. Unless you and your mate have been purposeful about discussing your expectations, you likely bring many to your marriage of which you are not consciously aware or you never made clear. Does your partner know yours? Do you know your partner's?
  2. Be reasonable in what you expect. Just having an expectation does not make it reasonable or realistic. Is it an expectation you, as a couple, can meet or might it need to be adjusted?
  3. Be clear about what you expect. Expectations must be expressed. Love doesn't turn people into mind readers. Be willing to express your expectations in a respectful manner. If necessary, evaluate, discuss, and adjust them. It isn't the differences in expectations that are harmful, but the lack of communication about those differences.
  4. Be motivated to meet your mate's expectations, even when you don't have the same expectations. Early on in relationships, partners are attentive to knowing and meeting each other's needs. Unfortunately, as our lives become busy with other things we sometimes forget to pay attention to those needs. Make a conscious effort to know and meet your partner's expectations.
  5. Expectation worksheet. "Lecture One Handout A."
- F. A close corollary to having unrealistic expectations from marriage is having myths concerning marriage. The National Marriage Project of Rutgers University has published "The Top Ten Myths of Marriage."(4) REMEMBER THESE ARE MYTHS! ("Lecture One Handout B.")
1. Marriage benefits men much more than women.
    - a. Contrary to earlier and widely publicized reports, recent research finds *men and women to benefit about equally from marriage*, although in different ways.
    - b. Both men and women live longer, happier, healthier and wealthier lives when they are married. Husbands typically gain greater health benefits while wives gain greater financial advantages.
  2. Having children typically brings a married couple closer together and increases marital happiness.
    - a. Many studies have shown that *the arrival of the first baby commonly has the effect of pushing the mother and father farther apart*, and bringing stress to the marriage.
    - b. However, couples with children have a slightly lower rate of divorce than childless couples.
  3. The keys to long-term marital success are good luck and romantic love.
    - a. Rather than luck and love, *the most common reasons couples give for their long-term*

*marital success are commitment and companionship.*

- b. They define their marriage as a creation that has taken hard work, dedication and commitment (to each other and to the institution of marriage). The happiest couples are friends who share lives and are compatible in interests and values.
4. The more educated a woman becomes, the lower are her chances of getting married.
  - a. A recent study based on marriage rates in the mid-1990s concludes that *today's women college graduates are more likely to marry* than their non-college peers, despite their older age at first marriage.
  - b. This is a change from the past, when women with more education were less likely to marry.
5. Couples who live together before marriage, and are thus able to test how well suited they are for each other, have more satisfying and longer-lasting marriages than couples who do not.
  - a. Many studies have found that *those who live together before marriage have less satisfying marriages* and a considerably higher chance of eventually breaking up.
  - b. One reason is that people who cohabit may be more skittish of commitment and more likely to call it quits when problems arise.
  - c. But in addition, the very act of living together may lead to attitudes that make happy marriages more difficult. The findings of one recent study, for example, suggest "there may be less motivation for cohabiting partners to develop their conflict resolution and support skills.
6. People can't be expected to stay in a marriage for a lifetime as they did in the past because we live so much longer today.
  - a. *Unless our comparison goes back a hundred years, there is no basis for this belief.*
  - b. The enormous increase in longevity is due mainly to a steep reduction in infant mortality.
  - c. And while adults today can expect to live a little longer than their grandparents, they also marry at a later age.
  - d. The life span of a typical, divorce-free marriage, therefore, has not changed much in the past fifty years.
  - e. Also, many couples call it quits long before they get to a significant anniversary: half of all divorces take place by the seventh year of a marriage.
7. Marrying puts a woman at greater risk of domestic violence than if she remains single.
  - a. Contrary to the proposition that for men "a marriage license is a hitting license," a large body of research shows that being unmarried—and especially living with a man outside of marriage—is associated with a considerably higher risk of domestic violence for women. One reason for this finding is that married women may significantly under report domestic violence.
  - b. Further, women are less likely to marry and more likely to divorce a man who is violent.
  - c. Yet it is probably also the case that married men are less likely to commit domestic violence because they are more invested in their wives' wellbeing, and more integrated into the extended family and community.
8. Married people have less satisfying sex lives, and less sex, than single people.
  - a. According to a large-scale national study, *married people have both more and better sex than do their unmarried counterparts.*
  - b. Not only do they have sex more often but they enjoy it more, both physically and emotionally.
9. Cohabitation is just like marriage, but without "the piece of paper."
  - a. Cohabitation *typically does not bring the benefits—in physical health, wealth, and emotional wellbeing—that marriage does.*
  - b. In terms of these benefits cohabitants in the United States more closely resemble singles than married couples. This is due, in part, to the fact that cohabitants tend not to be as committed as married couples, and they are more oriented toward their own personal autonomy and less to the wellbeing of their partner.
10. Because of the high divorce rate, which weeds out the unhappy marriages, people who stay married have happier marriages than people did in the past when everyone stuck it out, no matter how bad the marriage.
  - a. According to what people have reported in several large national surveys, *the general level of happiness in marriages has not increase and probably has declined slightly.*

- b. Some studies have found in recent marriages, compared to those of twenty or thirty years ago, significantly more work-related stress, more marital conflict and less marital interaction.

## **THE FIRST THING WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND ABOUT THE HOME IS THAT GOD CREATED MARRIAGE.**

- A. We learn from an examination of the Scriptures that God created man in his own image.
  - 1. "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.' So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Gn 1:26-27).
  - 2. What does it mean that man is made in the image of God?
    - a. There have been a variety of ideas put forward in the literature as to the meaning of this concept.
    - b. I don't want us to think about the various ideas different scholars have put forth, but I want us to think about the most likely meanings.(5)
      - 1) Some believe that the divine image sets man apart from the rest of God's creatures by emphasizing his dignity, which must be recognized and respected by one's fellows. While there can be no doubt that man's bearing the divine image should cause us to view all people with dignity, this is not what I believe is the main idea of the text.
      - 2) Some believe that this refers to man's being the apex of the creation. Man stands above the other creatures God has made.
        - a) The reasoning for this idea comes from Ps 8:5-8: "You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet: all flocks and herds, and the beast of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim in the paths of the seas."
        - b) The word translated "heavenly beings" in v. 5 could be translated "God." Thus, the idea could be that although man is lower than God, he is only a little lower than God. Being the apex of creation, man has dominion over all other living things.
      - 3) I still, however, remain unconvinced that this is the main idea in the text.
    - c. It is my conviction that this refers to man's moral, cognitive, and social attributes.
      - 1) We know from a multitude of Scriptures that God is a supremely moral Being. E.g., Lev 19:45: "I am the LORD who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy."
        - a) God's moral law arises out of his character.
        - b) Our moral capacity has great implications for the family relationship: I can choose how to interact with my wife—am I going to beat her or am I going to go and have an affair?—and I can choose how to interact with my wife—am I going to teach them to be moral and am I going to use spanking out of anger rather than a teaching method?
      - 2) We also know that God has great cognitive ability. E.g., "The foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength" (1 Cor 1:25).
        - a) If God and man neither had cognitive abilities, how could God place his moral law in a written form so that man could understand that law?
        - b) Man's cognitive abilities also have an impact on marriage: we are in this course to learn how to be better husbands, wives, and parents. If we did not have cognitive ability, we couldn't do that. Partners often need to retrain the way they think about their spouses. Without cognitive ability that would be impossible.
      - 3) We also know that God is also a social Being.
        - a) As Jesus prayed before his crucifixion, he mentioned the joint glory he shared with his Father prior to the Creation: "Now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the

glory I had with you before the world began” (Jn 17:5).

- b) God also desires fellowship with man whom he created: “We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ” (1 Jn 1:3).

B. God created marriage to fulfill man's social need.

1. “The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the LORD God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.' The LORD God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.' Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam no suitable helper was found. 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 he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called “woman,” for she was taken out of man.' For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame” (Gn 2:15-25).
2. It seems apparent that this text is the *theological account* of Creation, whereas Genesis one provides a *chronological account* of Creation.(6) The main reason for seeing Genesis 2 as a theological reading of Creation is that a simple, straightforward reading of the text would imply that God created the animals in a misguided attempt to find a helper for Adam. In reality, this text is showing that God supplies *all* of man's needs.
3. It is apparent from this text that God knows man's nature even better than man knows it himself, and God did not create man to live in isolation but he created man to live in community.
4. Like man, the animals are “formed” from the ground and they are “living creatures.” However, there is a qualitative difference in that God has made man in his own image.
  - a. Thus, God brings the animals to the man (not man to the animals) and man names the animals (they do not name him).
  - b. This is possible only because God has given man dominion over the animals.
5. God intends to create a helper for man before he starts parading the animals before Adam.
  - a. However, the Lord waits until Adam can fully appreciate the woman's position before she is created.
    - 1) The purpose of God's bringing the animals to Adam is not so that God can find a suitable helper for Adam, for God already knows what he intends to do (Has God not already made the animals male and female?).
    - 2) God, instead, is impressing upon Adam that he is along among the creatures—a horse isn't going to make a suitable helper for the man, nor is the sparrow, nor is the dog, etc.
  - b. In the previous chapter, the author did not describe man's creation until the very end to emphasize the special place that man holds among God's created things. In this text, the author describes the creation of the woman at the very end of this parade of animals to emphasize her special place in the life of man.
6. Man and animals were “formed” from the ground, but woman was “built” from man's rib.
  - a. By using these carefully chosen words, the writer emphasizes the special care God used to make woman the ideal companion for the man.
  - b. Woman is such an important and indispensable creature that a part of the body which God originally formed for man was selected by the Lord so that she could be made from it.
7. The Hebrew text of verse 23 exhibits man's excitement and inexpressible joy over finding a companion that suited him perfectly.
  - a. It seems that he had been searching diligently for a long time for a suitable mate, and when he found her, he burst out, This at least is bone of my bones, etc. Here, woman is not viewed first as a child bearer for man but is appreciated for her own worth as man's companion and fellow worker.

- b. “Bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” is a popular Hebrew expression for the closest kind of kinship or relationship.
- c. As in English, so also in Hebrew, there is a pun on man and woman in this passage.
  - 1) Up to this time, the writer had been using the word 'adham for man, but now he shifts to 'ish in order to create the wordplay.
  - 2) As is common in OT puns, these words are not related to one another etymologically but simply sound alike.
    - i. Since woman was taken out of man, she is dependent on him.
    - ii. And since man names his companion, he has authority over her (just as his naming of the beasts and birds demonstrate his authority over them).
      - i) Of course, this is not a hateful or exacting or overbearing kind of authority, but an authority that woman naturally respects from the man who provides for her and gives her protection and security. We will discuss this idea at length this semester.
      - ii) It is no more offensive to a Christian woman than Christ's authority is to the church.
      - iii) “False and sentimental notions of the equality of the sexes do not exalt but dishonor womanhood, which has its own distinctive excellence—and excellence that is different from man's.”
  - 3) Because God made the man and then made the woman for the man, we should expect men and women to be different.
    - i. Men and women are vastly different—not just in the sexual ways we often think. “Lecture One Handout B.”
    - ii. For example:(7)
      - i) Woman has greater constitutional vitality, perhaps because of her unique chromosome makeup. Normally, female outlives male by four to eight years in the US.
      - ii) Woman's metabolism is normally lower than man's.
      - iii) Man and woman differ in skeletal structure, woman having a shorter head, broader face, less protruding chin, shorter legs, and longer trunk.
      - iv) Woman has larger kidneys, liver, stomach, and appendix than man, but smaller lungs.
      - v) Woman has several unique and important functions: menstruation, pregnancy, lactation. Woman's hormones are of a different type and more numerous than man's.
      - vi) Woman's thyroid is larger and more active. It enlarges during pregnancy and menstruation; makes woman more prone to goiter; provides resistance to cold; is associated with her smooth-skinned, relatively hairless body and thin layer of subcutaneous fat.
      - vii) Woman's blood contains more water and 20 percent fewer red cells. Since the red cells supply oxygen to the body cells, woman tires more easily and is more prone to faint. Her constitutional vitality is, therefore, limited to “life span.” (When the working day in British factories was increased from ten to twelve hours under wartime conditions, accidents increased 150 percent among women but not at all among men.)
      - viii) On the average, man possesses 50 percent more brute strength than woman (40 percent of a man's body weight is muscle; 23 percent of a woman's).
      - ix) Woman's heart beats more rapidly (average 80 beats per minutes vs. 72 for man). Woman's blood pressure (10 points lower than man's) varies minute to minute, but she has fewer tendencies toward high blood pressure—at least until after menopause.
      - x) Woman's vital capacity or breathing power is significantly lower than man's.
      - xi) Woman withstands high temperatures better than man because her metabolism slows down less.

8. The husband and wife are to leave father and mother, cleave to each other, and become one flesh.
  - a. There are some who see this as applying to the man and not the woman.
    - 1) The idea is that the man is to leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, but the wife is not bound by such an instruction.
      - a) Jacob and Moses both lived with their wives' families, and some find support for this position in light of what Jacob and Moses did.
      - b) The main difficulty in understanding the text this way—even though the text refers to the man leaving his father and mother—is that Scripture often uses the male plural to indicate what humankind is to do: e.g., Jn 3:3: “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless *he* is born again.” Does Jesus mean to imply that women cannot be born again? Of course not.
    - 2) These instructions are likely, therefore, to be seen as applying to both the husband and the wife.
  - b. The husband is to leave his father and mother.
    - 1) The textbook says, “‘Leaving’ or ‘severance’ requires the young couple to establish a new home separate from their parents—sometimes the farther away the better” (p. 38).
    - 2) It is extremely important for the husband and wife to establish their independence when they marry.
      - a) Finances need to be controlled by the husband and wife, and not their parents. That doesn't mean that the parents can't send gifts of money, nor does it mean that parents can't continue to pay for college education if they so choose. However, Mom & Dad are no longer the providers.
      - b) Arguments need to be kept from Mom & Dad. As we'll discuss, there is no marriage which doesn't have arguments. Yet, those arguments need to be worked out in the confines of the marriage.
        - a) Boundaries need to be established for controlling parents. It's imperative that neither spouse allows his/her parents to continue to have control.
  - c. The husband is to cleave to his wife.
    - 1) Again, notice what the textbook says: “Whereas the leaving is a public act, the cleaving is a private one. It is an act of commitment. The word *cleave* means to join together, to glue together, to weld together” (p. 39).
    - 2) This is, as the textbook notes, a commitment.
      - a) This is a commitment to the other spouse above and beyond all other human attachments.
        - i. This commitment says, “I will love you no matter what happens.” Accidents can mar physical beauty and can even take away sexuality. What if your spouse has some terrible accident which takes away his or her physical beauty? What happens if she or he gets a disease which makes sex impossible?
        - ii. This commitment says, “I will provide for you.” The Bible teaches that we have an obligation to provide for our families: “If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Tm 5:8). That means that no matter what it takes, I'm going to make sure that my family—my wife and children—have enough food, clothing, and shelter.
        - iii. This is a commitment to seek what's best for my spouse. Sometimes in marriage, I may need to do something I don't especially want to do, because it's what my spouse needs from me at the moment. As I cleave to him or her, I'm going to do what's best for him or her.
      - b) This is also a commitment not to divorce.
        - i. We live in a country where divorce is truly epidemic.
          - i) The divorce rate is twice today what it was in the 1960's.(8)
          - ii) Divorce reached its highest point in the 1980's and has been slowly declining ever since. However, it is still true that married couples today face about a 40 to 50 percent change of divorcing at some point.

ii. Jesus' words speak poignantly about divorce: Mt 19:3-9.

- i) Divorce is going to happen, even to Christian couples.
- ii) However, what will we do when divorce happens? Will we divorce *only* for biblical reasons, or will we divorce for any and all reasons?
- iii) We will spend more time talking about the Christian response to divorce later in the semester.

d. The husband and his wife are also to become one flesh.

- 1) I do not believe that this refers only to the sexual relationship; however, this does certainly include sexual relations.
- 2) Some Christians are embarrassed by frank discussions of human sexuality.
  - a) We need to remember, however, that God made us as sexual beings. He created the penis with all of its functions & the vagina with all of its functions.
  - b) Since God created us as sexual beings, we should expect to find Scripture containing numerous references to sexuality.

i. The Song of Solomon contains much graphic dialogue between a husband and his wife.

- i) The wife, for example, says to her husband: "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth—for your love is more delightful than wine. Pleasing is the fragrance of your perfumes; your name is like perfume poured out. No wonder the maidens love you! Take me away with you—let us hurry! Let the king bring me into his chambers" (1:2-4).
- ii) Solomon likewise speaks to his wife: "How beautiful your sandaled feet, O prince's daughter! Your graceful legs are like jewels, the work of a craftsman's hands. Your navel is a rounded goblet that never lacks blended wine. Your waist is a mound of wheat encircled by lilies. Your breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle. Your neck is like an ivory tower. Your eyes are the pools of Heshbon by the gate of Bath Rabbim. Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon looking toward Damascus. Your head crowns you like Mount Carmel. Your hair is like royal tapestry; the king is held captive by its tresses. How beautiful you are and how pleasing, O love, with your delights! Your stature is like that of the palm, and your breasts like clusters of fruit. I said, 'I will climb the palm tree; I will take hold of its fruit.' May your breasts be like the clusters of the vine, the fragrance of your breath like apples, and your mouth like the best wine" (7:1-9).

ii. Paul encourages the people of Corinth to give themselves to their spouses: "But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer" (1 Cor 7:2-5). If Paul tells the Corinthians that they should have sex, how can sex be dirty or improper?

C. Other texts—in both testaments—affirm the importance of marriage.

1. "He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the LORD" (Prov 18:22).
2. Prov 31:10-31.
3. "I hate divorce," says the LORD God of Israel, "and I hate a man's covering himself with violence as well as with his garment," says the LORD Almighty" (Mal 3:16).
4. Notice the qualifications of elders, the highest officers in the church: "Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?)" (1 Tm 3:2-5).

5. "Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral" (Heb 13:4).

## **BECAUSE GOD CREATED THE FAMILY, WE SHOULD EXPECT TO FIND BENEFITS TO THE FAMILY.**

- A. The United States Government has published a report which gives the Benefits of Healthy Marriages (Lecture One Handout D).(9)
- B. The Benefits of Healthy Marriages for Women:
  1. More satisfying relationship.
  2. Emotionally healthier.
  3. Wealthier.
  4. Less likely to be victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or other violent crimes.
  5. Less likely to attempt or commit suicide.
  6. Decrease risk of drug and alcohol abuse.
  7. Less likely to contract STD's.
  8. Less likely to remain or end up in poverty.
  9. Have better relationships with their children.
  10. Physically healthier.
- C. For men:
  1. Live longer.
  2. Physically healthier.
  3. Wealthier.
  4. Increase in the stability of employment.
  5. Higher wages.
  6. Emotionally healthier.
  7. Decrease risk of drug and alcohol abuse.
  8. Have better relationships with their children.
  9. More satisfying sexual relationship.
  10. Less likely to commit violent crimes.
  11. Less likely to contract STD's.
  12. Less likely to attempt or commit suicide.
- D. For children:
  1. More likely to attend college.
  2. More likely to succeed academically.
  3. Physically healthier.
  4. Emotionally healthier.
  5. Less likely to attempt or commit suicide.
  6. Demonstrate less behavioral problems in school.
  7. Less likely to be a victim of physical or sexual abuse.
  8. Less likely to commit delinquent behaviors.
  9. Less likely to abuse drugs or alcohol.
  10. Have a better relationship with their mothers and fathers.
  11. Decrease their chances of divorcing when they get married.
  12. Less likely to become pregnant as a teenager, or impregnate someone.
  13. Less likely to be sexually active as teenagers.
  14. Less likely to contract STD's.
  15. Less likely to be raised in poverty.
- E. For communities:
  1. Higher rates of physically healthy citizens.
  2. Higher rates of emotionally healthy citizens.
  3. Higher rates of educated citizens.
  4. Lower domestic violence rates.
  5. Lower crime statistics.

6. Lower teen age pregnancy rates.
7. Lower rates of juvenile delinquency.
8. Higher rates of home ownership.
9. Lower rates of migration.
10. Higher property values.
11. Decreased need for social services.

(1) Cynthia Burggraf Torppa, "Preparing Adolescents and Young Adults for Marriage: Developing Realistic Expectations for Family Communication," Fact Sheet (FLM-FS-4-00, The Ohio State University Extension).

(2) Joan M. Reid, "You Want Me to Do What?" Fact Sheet (FLM-FS-2-03, The Ohio State University Extension).

(3) Ibid.

(4) David Popenoe and Barbara Defoe Whitehead, "The Top Ten Myths of Marriage," The National Marriage Project, March 2002.

(5) These ideas come from John T. Willis, *Genesis* (Abilene, TX: ACU Press, 1984), 88-89.

(6) Most of these ideas also come from Willis, 110-114.

(7) These ideas of the differences between men and women are taken from Gary Smalley, *Hidden Keys to a Loving Lasting Marriage* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), 15-16.

(8) *The State of our Unions 2007* (The National Marriage Project, Rutgers), 18.

(9) The Healthy Marriage Initiative, "Benefits of Healthy Marriages," accessed January 6, 2008 at

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/healthymarriage/benefits/index.html#children>