

We live all our relationships within God's unified, unfinished love story.

CREATION: The Triune God created all of us for **intimate partnership**.

Life is a gift. Marriage plays a central role in the story God is telling us about his glory and our joy in all things. Sex-in-marriage plays a central role in God's good plan for all things.

¹⁸Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." ...²¹So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²²And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³Then the man said,

*"This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called Woman,
because she was taken out of Man."*

²⁴Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

Genesis 2:18-24
Song of Solomon
Proverbs
Malachi 2:13-16;
Matthew 19
1 Corinthians 6-7
Ephesians 5:22-32

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FALL: Adam & Eve rebelled against God. Everything is broken and twisted. Misery attaches itself to every good gift.

6So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. 7Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

Genesis 3:6-7
Genesis 6:5-9
Jer 9:5-8; 17:9
Matthew 15:11-20
Ephesians 4:17-22

The EXTENT of sin, guilt, shame, confusion, and misery

Sin – guilt

[Satan, the deceptive accuser,

Sinned against – shame

will exploit all of these sorrows

Story – false standards

because he hates truth & love.]

Wholeness & dis-integration

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REDEMPTION: God has rescued us by his grace. Our sin is not the final word. The shame we carry due to our sin or the sin of others is not the final word on our lives. Our stories are not finished. People who believe in Jesus are people of tremendous hope because Jesus is our hope and he is tremendous.

³The husband should **give** to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. ⁴ For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise **the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.** ⁵ *Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.* 1 Corinthians 7:3-5

⁴ Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant ⁵ or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful... ⁷ Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Ephesians 2:1-10; 4:23-24
Galatians 3:13; 5:22-24
Titus 2:11-14
Hebrews 3:12-13; 10:19-25

Redeemed – Grace for sexual sinners.

Restored – Covering for our shame – mercy & comfort for the sinned against.

Renewed – Power for godliness. Contentment is gain. Hope for God's help!

Resist – Push back the effects of the Fall **by faith!**

Rewarding Love – Generous self-giving / hospitality (righteousness vs. wickedness)

Re-integration: Total Nakedness - *"To be naked with another person is a sort of picture or symbolic demonstration of perfect honesty, perfect trust, perfect giving, and commitment, and if the heart is not naked along with the body, then the whole action becomes a lie and a mockery. It becomes an involvement in an absurd and tragic contradiction: the giving of the body but the withholding of the self. Exposure of the body in a personal encounter is like the telling of one's deepest secret: afterwards there is no going back, no pretending that the secret is one's own or that the other does not know. It is, in effect the very last step in human relations, and therefore never one to be taken lightly. It is not a step that establishes deep intimacy, but one that presupposes it."*

Mike Mason, *The Mystery of Marriage*

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Consummation: Our lives are eschatological. We are made for better and more lasting joy than we can presently imagine.

"Hallelujah!

For the Lord our God
the Almighty reigns.

⁷Let us rejoice and exult
and give him the glory,

*for **the marriage of the Lamb has come,
and his Bride has made herself ready...***

⁹And the angel said to me, "Write this: **Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.**" And he said to me, "These are the true words of God."
Revelation 19:6-9

A few Resources:

Sign up and attend the **Healthy Sexuality Conference February 21-22**
Watch for links to last year's conference on our NSF website.

Books we use frequently, recommend, have helped us & influenced us (and our talks about marriage)

Marriage (with chapter(s) about sex)

As for Me and My House, Walter Wangerin, Jr.

The Meaning of Marriage, Tim & Kathy Keller

(also see their Psalms & Marriage Devotionals)

The Marriage Book, Nicky and Sila Lee

The Mystery of Marriage, Mike Mason

Love and War, John and Stacy Eldridge

Each for the Other, Bryan Chapel

Books about Sex

A Celebration of Sex, Dr. Douglas E. Rosenau

Under the Sheets, Dr. Kevin Leman