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The Marvel and Wonder of Marriage

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Proverbs 30:18-19 (ESV)

Three things are too wonderful for me; four I do not understand: the way of an eagle in the sky, the way of a serpent on a rock, the way of a ship on the high seas, and the way of a man with a virgin.

We're in this month of February, celebrating. Of course, we just observed Valentine's Day here in the United States, and many understand this to be the month of love, even around the world. It was the eighth-century Galaxian Sacramentary that recorded the celebration of the Feast of Saint Valentine on February 14th, and this date has remained the same ever since. It is thought that this time of year was chosen in association with the singing lovebirds of early spring, starting to appear in the colder winter climates during this month.

Now, when we celebrate the marvel and wonder of marriage, we are fully aware that not everyone is called into the marriage union, and even the scriptures highlight there are some benefits to not being married. But we must look at the institution of marriage as God designed it and celebrate it according to His word. He tells us to do this, to honor Him in all that He's created; all of creation was designed to give Him glory, praise, and honor. So if you're listening to this today and you're not married, I hope it's a word of encouragement to you to honor and respect what God has designed in marriage. And we want to encourage you as well, that God has made us as unique individuals to flourish and live before Him and honor Him in unique ways. There's no one else like you, or like anyone in the history of the world, and your uniqueness is a unique reflection of the image of God that you are stewarding as well.

But when a person enters a marriage union, they enter what the Bible describes as a mystery and somewhat of a wonder. So, we go back to the beginning to marvel and wonder at

marriage. Genesis says this: in the beginning, God created all things. Everything came from Him. He is the genesis of all things. Through His spoken word, there became light and darkness. Then there became water and land. He separated these waters from the land and formed together all that we know as the created and seen order, and it's marvelous and wonderful. He even said it Himself, it was good, and He enjoyed it. And then, after putting the land separated from the sea and causing springs to come forth on the land to nurture plant life, He put fish in the sea, land animals on the land, and birds in the sky. Then Genesis 1:27 says, He created mankind in His own image, in the image of Himself, of God. He created them male and female. Now how did He do this? Genesis 2 goes more specifically, it says, the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground.

Somehow, God formed man from the dust of the ground. It's a miraculous creation. And He breathed into this being, into his nostrils, inspired him. The word "inspire" literally means to breathe into. He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being. Life itself is miraculous. It's supernatural. It's a wonder. But then God observed, for the first time in all of creation, that something wasn't good. And He said in Genesis 2:18, in our recording of His revelation, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." Now, everything had been formed out of the dust of the ground. All living creatures up to this point had been formed from the dust of the earth. But not the woman. She was formed differently here. Genesis 2:21 records it this way: "The Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep, and while he was sleeping (it's the first anaesthetic and surgery performed), He took one of the man's ribs from his side, and then He 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."

Just a side note right here: This text tells us that God Himself is the great matchmaker. And if you're out there listening today and you're wondering about a spouse for you, could I encourage you to seek the great matchmaker, the one who knows all and sees all? Notice the very first marriage was arranged by Him, and if you read through the scriptures, there are many marriages that are brought to fruition by God Himself through people who were seeking Him. He brought the woman to the man. Now this is a great mystery, friends. The woman was created out of the flesh of man. I don't know what all happened here. God said it was not good that His image was in one being. God Himself exists in a three-part being: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit. The mystery of the Trinity, the 3 in 1. But then He put His image into one being, and it wasn't good. And so He separated this image from the first man into another being, into a created woman. I don't know if He just pulled flesh out of

there or some of His feminine characteristics, and He left more masculine characteristics in the man. But something mysterious is going on here. God put His image into one and then separated it into two, and they were made for each other, suitable for each other.

And then God brought this new creation to the man. And the man said, now the man had naming rights. He named all the living creatures up to that time, and whatever he called them, God gave them that name. And now the man looked at this new creation standing before him, and he said, this is now bone of my bones, I mean, literally taken out of his rib, flesh of my flesh, taken out of his flesh, a marvelous, unique creation, the only one created in this way. She was bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman because it literally means taken out from man. Such a marvel and wonder, friends, such a mystery. And then God Himself declared what marriage is. I mean, we weren't there. We didn't get a vote. Our opinion didn't matter. We weren't even a thought in His mind. He knew us then. But He is designing the order of creation Himself. And here's what He says now about marriage: "For this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother, be united or cleave to his wife, and they will become one flesh." I want to make a couple of observations here as we celebrate the marvel and wonder of marriage. I mean, there is some mystery to it, friends. We'll never totally understand it. If you're out there today and you're in a marriage union, I want I want to encourage you today.

You are part of something that God made from the very beginning. And by God's design, we can say this by God's design, a marriage between a man and a woman in all of creation and all of creation declares the glory of God. But this unique relationship between a man and a woman made in the image of God, male and female, where He brings them back together as one in this covenant of marriage. This relationship is, by God's design, the most perfect representation of the image of God in all of creation. I mean, it is the most visible reflection of the nature of God that we have to see in all of creation. And of course, the Scripture says, all of creation gives testimony to who God is and what

He's like, so that we have no excuse to know that He's there, that He created us and we're in His image. It's a marvel and a wonder. And this is why Paul wrote, or the writer of Hebrews, we don't exactly know for sure who wrote it. But in Hebrews 13:4, the writer said this: "The marriage bed should be honored by everyone." I mean. Not only is it the most perfect representation of the image of God in all of creation, but we see here, it is also the first social institution, social structure laid by God in the history of the world.

And we know so clearly that as goes biblical marriage between a man and a woman, so goes culture. So, the writer of Hebrews simply said, "The marriage bed should be honored by everyone." Every marriage union between a man and a woman is an individual brick laid in the social structures of our societies. It is a foundational brick that the society, the culture is built on. And so, we should honor it. Individuals should honor it. We in the marriages ourselves should honor our marriages. Our churches should honor our marriages. Our states should honor our marriages. Our businesses should honor our marriages because this is part of the fabric that holds a culture together. There are numerous studies about this that have been published. One of them looks back for centuries and sees that if marriage gets slowly degraded and the idea of an exclusive union between a man and a woman gets shunned or degraded, put aside in a civilization, that civilization will slowly start to degrade internally from immorality, and it will last somewhere between 70 and 90 years. I mean, the research shows this clearly. It's interesting. The 104th Congress of the United States issued a study in 1996 that was looking at why there was such a rapid increase in the number of children on welfare in America. The ultimate findings of this study simply said this: the number of children on welfare in the United States is increasing so rapidly because the number of children born to unmarried women is increasing so rapidly.

And the number one finding of the study was simply this: marriage between a man and a woman is the foundation of a successful society. They could have looked in Genesis and known that and could have saved a lot of money on that study. The marriage bed should be honored by everyone. We're encouraging you today. If you're not married, can you work to support and encourage and care for those in your lives that are married? And if you are married, we want to encourage you to keep working at it. Keep seeking God for love and patience and kindness with your spouse. Keep seeking Him for that tenderness you need and forgiveness you need at times, that unlimited grace that husbands and wives need to show to each other. I mean, there is something about this mystery of marriage we'll never figure out, but I want to. I want to tell you today, friends, it's under attack. This union is under attack. And it's a spiritual war around this union. I mean, there is one who hates the idea of marriage because it is the most perfect representation of the image of God. And our marriages are not taking place just like our lives. They're not taking place on a playground but in the middle of a massive spiritual war over what God has revealed to us to be true in all kinds of lies and deceptions that would lead us down the road of enslavement and oppression.

And there is this idea of marriage that's being batted around in our culture. But the real depth and truth of the matter is we didn't design it in the beginning. It is a creation of Almighty God,

designed to give Him, give Him glory and praise and honor. And when a marriage grows and matures and reflects more not only God's relationship with the church but also reflects His nature in the world, many, many are blessed by it. I mean, it's hard to describe the power and legacy of a marriage that matures and goes the distance and leaves a mark. My wife and I are both fortunate to have both of our parents still alive and still married, and I can't even describe to you how impactful it is to us to watch them continue to mature in their love for each other, caring for one another, and the shelter their love has provided for their children over the years. It is an absolute marvelous wonder. It's part of God's nature and God's design. King Solomon saw this and totally agreed. I mean, he said this in Proverbs 30, verses 18 and 19. He said, "There are three things too wonderful for me for that I can't even comprehend. They're so marvelous." He said, "the way of an eagle in the sky." I don't know if you've seen an eagle flying, but it's it's marvelous.

It's wonderful. "The way of a snake on a rock." Have you seen a snake slither and move yet? Its body doesn't feel like it's moving yet. As it slithers, it projects itself. And he said, "the way of a ship at a sea." If you've ever been out in a great ocean and even a large ship, it feels like a little pea floating out there. These things are hard to comprehend. "The way of an eagle in the sky, a snake on a rock, and a ship on a sea." But then he mentions the fourth thing, "the way of a man with a woman." A few years back, I was at home visiting my parents, and I got the opportunity to ride with them on about a one-hour trip to an event we were going to, and I sat in the back seat and my father was driving. My mother was sitting in the passenger seat, and as I sat there, a song came on the radio and that song just broke me. I want to play that song for you now. It's a song sung by many different people over the years, but it's a song about the legacy that a marriage union, a marvelous and wonderful marriage union can leave if it goes the distance and continues to mature in the love of God. Let's listen to this song and then I'll have a closing prayer.

Between the Two of Them - Alabama

Heavenly father, we thank you today for this gift of marriage, and we pray specifically today for those that are struggling in some way around this unique relationship, those that are hurting because they're not married and they wish they were, or those that are in a marriage that's painful for them, or those that are dealing with the loss and the pain and the hurt of a lost spouse. Father, thank you for those marriages that have been an example to us. Thank you for our spouses, those of us that have them. Father, we need your help as we carve out this unique relationship, this side of eternity. For all those married couples that are listening, or

married persons that are listening, give them the grace and strength to continue to grow in their marriage unions. And for all that are listening, father, help us come to that point where we can do what you've invited us to do honor the marriage bed and honor this unique institution that you have given us. We praise you, father. Thank you. In Jesus name, Amen.