

Nampa Bible Church Home Groups
Marriage Foundations Part 2: What is marriage?

In our last meeting we concluded that we are made in the image of God and our purpose on earth and, more specifically in our marriage, is to bring Him glory. By choosing to honor our spouse and build them up we can help them to more effectively reflect God in their life. Now that we know who we are we can turn our focus toward the next foundational topic. In this lesson we will work to define what marriage is and what purpose it serves.

- 1) **Since marriage brings two people together as one, (Genesis) is it fair to say that all of the duties of the individual Christian are duties of the married as well?** With the exception of gender specific commands, such as leadership, the answer is yes. The strengths of each partner should combine to make us into something of a superhero; a “person” with many more strengths than any one individual could have. Our marriages should model God’s attributes and the relationship of the Trinity. Strengths such as compassion, justice, strength, wisdom all should be heightened as we defer to, admonish and submit to one another. On the other side of the coin, our negative attributes should be gradually smoothed out and eliminated as we mature and grow with the help of our spouse.
- 2) **After reflecting on your answer to the previous question, name as many duties of married couples as you can.** Honoring and glorifying God, evangelism, discipleship, being fruitful and multiplying, hospitality, caring for those in need, all of I Corinthians 13 and all the one anothers. A marriage is no better than its purpose, and its purpose should be to mirror God.
- 3) **Why do marriages matter in the church?** Marriages are, as Ephesians 5:22-23 makes clear, representations of Christ and the Church. The church is made up, primarily, of married families and this forms a sort of foundation. Good marriages are solid bedrock upon which to build while bad marriages are shifting sand. We should be constantly asking ourselves the question: “If everyone else’s marriages looked like mine, where would we be?”. It is vital that marriages in the church look different than worldly marriages. The world needs to be able to look at Christians and think “wow, they really love and sacrifice for each other!”.
- 4) **What do marriages achieve that singles cannot?** Marriage produces instantaneous accountability because you can’t hide your faults from your spouse. Married couples are also able to better witness to and admonish other couples. Marriage is truly a unique relationship that allows us to shape the character of another person’s soul.
- 5) **How do good marriages glorify God?** Marriages are the closest relationship we can experience on earth. They, in their intimacy, are the best representation of what our relationship with God will be like. Marriage is a picture of unity that foreshadows our relationship with God. Good marriages also should bring out the best attributes in one another and allow us to encourage one another to holiness. When we selflessly love one another, show grace, humility and consider our spouse more important than ourselves, we are most Christlike. Marriages show the world God. Good marriages are also the best antidote to divorce in the church. It is extremely important for us to recognize the deceptiveness of sin, and of our own hearts. Sin rapidly builds on itself and many Christians have found themselves in divorce court because of it. The wise Christian builds godly relationships that offer accountability and support for their marriage. Good marriages also glorify God by producing godly children. Bad marriages often sow wickedness in children that is carried on for many generations.
- 6) **How do couples in good marriages benefit?** On earth, couples in good marriages benefit with peace, unconditional love, support, intimacy and someone who is there to help them up when they fall. Spiritually we benefit from good marriages by sharpening one another, being more effective for the kingdom and having unhindered prayers. Marriages, because of the trials and blessings they produce, yield rapid growth, or rapid decline, depending how we respond.

The goal of our marriages should be to honor God *and* to honor our spouse so that *they* can honor God. We should strive to enhance our spouse’s glory so they can live out the glory of God. Our marriages should be purposefully creating life and shaping life to maturity.