

Two Into One • Part 1: The Foundation

INTRO • A Strong Foundation // 1 Corinthians 3:11–13

¹¹ For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³ each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.

1. I grew up in the suburbs of Chicago and every once in a while went into the City.
 2. On one trip when I was about 7, we passed a lot where they were building a new skyscraper.
 - a. They'd just started and I didn't understand why they'd dug a big hole. Shouldn't they go *up*?
 - b. My mother explained; they ***start*** with the ***foundation***.
 - c. And the ***higher*** they want to go, the ***deeper*** that foundation needs to be.
 3. Before a tree produces fruit, its roots are ***secure, solid***.
 4. What's true of buildings & trees is true of Life.
 - a. ***We*** flourish by laying a firm foundation in God's Word & Ways.
 - b. Marriage will either rest on our wisdom, or God's.
 - c. We can build our marriage on the gold & silver of God's Plan or the wood & hay of this world.
 5. Tonight, as we begin this series on Marriage, we lay a solid foundation in God's Plan for a Husband and Wife.
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Let's Begin with a Look at Who This Series Is For

Singles

1. While this is a marriage series, it's for singles too.
2. We'll be considering singleness & celibacy, as well as divorce & remarriage.
3. The best time to study marriage is ***before*** you get hitched.
4. We can save ourselves a world of trouble by understanding God's plan for marriage before saying "I do."
5. But this won't be just for those who ***will*** be married. It's for those called to ***remain*** single.
 - a. The Body of Christ has many members, each with different callings.
 - b. There will be times when the single Christian offers counsel to their married friends.
 - c. Truth is true, no matter whose mouth it comes from.

Couples

1. This series is obviously for couples.
2. Young & middle aged couples who've never heard God's plan for marriage will be helped.
3. ***Older*** couples too can get a lot out of what we're about to look at.
 - a. The danger a long & comfortable marriage faces is ***routine***.
 - b. A couple can become so used to one another, they stop growing together.
 - c. This series can renew a couple's commitment to keep growing.

The Family

1. The ideas of “marriage & family” have seen a major **edit** in the last 30 years.
 2. Until recently, Western Civilization regarded a *family* as **based on** the marriage of a man & woman, with whatever children come from their union.
 3. That’s no longer the case. **Less than half** of adults define the family in that **traditional way**.¹
 4. Sociologists *now* say a family is **“two or more people who care about each other.”**²
 5. *Wikipedia* defines a family as “any group of people affiliated by kinship, common-interest, or co-residence.”³
 6. Marriage has also been thrown over to something very far from tradition.
 - a. Same-sex marriage is now legal.
 - b. And the transgender movement has tossed the entire question of who can marry who completely on its head.
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7. As we begin this series on marriage, the place to start is **at the beginning** – by defining marriage.
 8. We’ll take a look at what **God** says marriage is.
 9. We’ll see it’s not just some man-made social convention as most modern thinking holds.
 10. Marriage is **ordained & sanctioned** by God. In fact, marriage is **central** to creation.
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THE FOUNDATION

The Purpose of Marriage

1. The best place for us to begin is at the **beginning**. Genesis 2 . . .

¹⁸ And the LORD God said, “It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.”

2. At the conclusion of **each** of the first 6 days of creation, God said– “It’s good.”
 3. At the end of the final day, He looked at it all & declared, ‘It’s **VERY** good!’
 4. In Hebrew, poetry is conveyed by repetition of a **thought**, rather than as in English by **sound**.
 5. If we begin at 1:1 & read to this verse we’d be used to hearing; “It is good, it is good, it is very good.”
 - a. So in v18, when we read, “it is **NOT** good” it’s like someone playing a loud sour note.
 - b. It **provokes** the question, “**What’s** NOT good in God’s *very good* creation?”
 - c. This is ch2; **sin** doesn’t arrive till the next ch?
 6. God declares something not good because He isn’t **finished**.
 7. This is still the 6th day & the human race isn’t **complete**. There’s one more thing to do.
 8. What isn’t good is that the man is **alone**. The remedy, the solution, is a **companion**.
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9. The companion God makes for the man is the woman, a wife.
 - a. But don’t miss what this passage reveals about the **PURPOSE** of marriage.
 - b. The purpose of marriage is to solve the problem of **loneliness**.
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¹ Only 46%, according to Barna, George *The Future of the American Family*, Moody Press: Chicago 1993 p. 26

² *ibid*

³ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Family>

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10. There's a difference between being *alone* & being *lonely*.
 - a. Most people need at least *some* time *alone*.
 - b. **Loneliness** is a painful emotion where we feel *isolated*, cut-off from others.
 - c. Being lonely has little to do with the *presence* of others.
 - d. We've all experienced *feeling* lonely while surrounded by people.
 - e. It isn't their *presence* that removes loneliness,
 - f. It's **interaction** with those *we know & care about* that matters.
 - g. We need **connection**.
 11. That's why the answer to the man's problem in Gen2 is a helper **comparable** to him.
 - a. That word "**helper**" means one who assists in whatever the **need**.
 - b. And what Adam **needed** was **companionship; connection** →
 - 1) A **relationship** with someone *like* him.
 - 2) As it says, someone "**comparable** to him."
 - c. This companion had to be someone who could share his life on *every* level.
 - d. Someone who could truly **relate** to him.
 12. God's remedy for man's loneliness wasn't a **dog, cat, parrot, or fish**.
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13. Think about Adam at this point in Gen2. He's just been created.
 - a. All he's known for the few hours of his life is *being* alone & he's fine with it.
 - b. There's a lot to see & do; he stays busy.
 - c. But as God looks into Adam's *future*, He sees the loneliness ahead if Adam *remains* alone.
 - d. So He sets about to solve that inevitable problem of loneliness.
 - e. First, He helps Adam realize his **need** for a companion.

19 Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. 20 So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.

1. These 2 vs seem an interruption to the story of Eve's creation.
 - a. V18 relates God's intention to create her. V21 describes her creation.
 - b. Why this 2 verse parenthesis where Adam names the animals?
 - c. It's **not** an interruption. It's vital to the story.
 - d. Adam was alone but didn't **FEEL** lonely. So God gave him a task so he would.
2. **Picture** it ...
 - a. Along come the animals, by pairs to facilitate **naming** them.
 - b. Adam begins, "Bull-Cow / Rooster-Hen / Stag-Doe / Stallion-Mare / Ram-Ewe."
 - c. Adam was a sharp guy. This is before the Fall. He has full use of his intellectual capacity.
 - 1) We're told we only use between 15 & 20% of our total brain power.
 - 2) Adam's firing on all cylinders. A master of observation, logic & language.
 - 3) We can be sure it wasn't long before he realized all the animals possessed a **mate**, one **like** them but **different enough** to make it fun.

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- d. And you just know after the first dozen pairs he's looking down the line queued up before him to see if there's one lone, hairless, 2-legged creature.
 - e. But as the last of the animals passes by, as it says at the end of v20 –

there was not found a helper comparable to him.

- 1) A dog makes a great *pet*, but not a *companion*.
 - 2) A horse is intelligent & provides transportation, but there's no *connection*.
 - 3) A cow provides milk & double-doubles, but makes for a *lousy conversationalist*.
- f. None of the animals could meet Adam's *real* need.
 - g. And now *he* knew what *God* knew & declared not good → Not only is he alone, he *FEELS* lonely.
3. It was God's intention to *bless* Adam by providing a companion.
- a. But *before* the blessing, Adam needed to *know his need*, & that meant the experience of pain.
 - b. This is ever God's way with us. He intends to bless.
 - c. But in order to *realize* that blessing for the good it is, we need first to *see* the need, *feel* the pain of loss & lack the blessing comes to fill.

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4. Now that Adam *feels* lonely, God sets about to provide a companion.

²¹ And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. ²² Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.

- 1. God took from Adam's *side*.
 - a. Not from his head that she would be *above* him.
 - b. Nor from his foot to be *beneath*.
 - c. He took from Adam's *side*; that she would be *next to* & *equal to* him.
 - 1) From close to his heart to be *treasured* by him.
 - 2) From under his arm to be *protected*.
 - 2. Once God fashioned the woman, He brought her to the man.
 - 3. This is the 1st marriage ceremony.
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4. Take note that *from the beginning*, it was God's plan that a man be married to one woman.
- a. Adam didn't suggest this. God planned & carried it out.
 - b. And the solution to man's need for a companion was a woman; not another man nor two or more women.
 - c. As has been said, God created Adam & *Eve*; not Adam & *Steve*. Nor Adam & Eve, Claire, Janice, Brittany & Tiffany.

²³ And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."

- 1. Adam *recognized* Eve's essential *difference* from the animals & *equality* to him.
- 2. In ancient cultures, a person showed their authority over something by *naming* it.
 - a. In the creation, God gave dominion of Earth to Adam.
 - b. That authority was validated & implemented when God assigned Adam the task of naming the animals.

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- c. But when Eve came to Adam, he realized she was **not** one he could **assign** a name to **because she was his equal** & was to **share in the dominion** of creation.
 - d. So, he **GAVE** her his name, altering it slightly so that it marks the **difference** between them as male & female.
 - e. But, his **giving** her his name marks the fact, in their relationship as husband & wife, they have **different roles**.
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Complementarity

1. It's crucial we set this at the start because it's under assault today.
 - a. Radical feminism & humanistic egalitarianism reject the Bible & want to not only redefine marriage & the roles of husbands & wives –
 - b. They want to fundamentally alter what it means to be male & female.
 - c. They claim words like 'man' & 'woman' are just plastic social constructs we can pour whatever meaning we want into.
 - d. For centuries people held a traditional view of marriage based on the Bible.
 - e. Now, Progressives demand we reject the old, worn-out definitions for things like *man*, *woman*, *family*, *marriage*, *husband*, & *wife*.
 - f. They want to leave it to **individuals** to define what those things **to them**.
2. If there's no God or He doesn't matter; if the Bible is nothing but a collection of myths, then Law **isn't** based on an absolute, unchanging standard of right & wrong.
 - a. It's merely a social contract people agree on.
 - b. So, why NOT allow same-sex marriage?
 - c. Why not allow a guy to marry another guy, or → His car or laptop. Or a woman her iPad if it makes her happy?
 - d. If humans **alone** set the rules & decide what's right, that makes sense.
3. During this series, we'll unapologetically share what God's Word says about marriage and the roles of the husband and wife.
 - a. While it won't square with either feminism or egalitarianism; it's true!
 - b. This is the revelation & counsel of the God Who made us **male & female, man & woman**.
 - c. Marriage is **His** plan. He means something specific for a **husband** & a **wife**.
 - d. Life only works when we follow the Creator's plan.
 - e. Anything else is the way of sorrow & ruin.
4. It's clear from the account of creation that **both** the man & woman bear the image of God.

Genesis 1:26–28 • ²⁶ Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” ²⁷ So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. ²⁸ Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

- a. There's something important in these verses.
- b. Note in v26 that humanity's possession of God's image is linked to dominion of Earth.

“Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion ...”

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- c. We usually think of God's image in man as being in the realm of **personality** so that relationship can take place. And certainly that's **part** of it.
 - d. But God's image is connected here to mankind's assignment to have dominion.
 - e. V27 makes it clear that assignment is to **BOTH** the man & woman. →

27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion

- f. The way man & woman were to take dominion over Earth was by being fruitful & multiplying. → And **THAT** takes place **thru marriage**.
5. Just as in the ancient world a king manifested his dominion over a region by setting a statue, an image of himself there, so God created human beings in His image & set them on Earth.
- a. He is Ruler over the universe & set His image-bearer on Earth as His **representative ruler**; it's a **stewardship**.
 - b. Humanity exercises that stewardship **jointly** as man & woman, husband & wife.
 - c. Gen1 is the **summary** description of humanity's creation.
 - d. Gen2 **zooms in** on that specific, final act of creation so that we see the **basis of the relationship between** the husband & wife.
 - e. They have different roles to **complement** each other.
6. In defining these different roles, in 1 Cor. 11, Paul repeatedly refers to the **order** of creation.
- a. The man was created **first**.
 - b. As well, the woman was created **for** the man, as his companion; to assist & support him.
 - c. While Adam acknowledges their essential equality by **giving** Eve **his** name, he's the one to **initiate** that. Eve doesn't **claim** her name; he bestows it on her.
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7. So, in marriage, the man, created first, bears the **ultimate responsibility for the marriage relationship**, while the woman **assists** him as an equal companion.
- a. He's the **leader**, she's the **follower**.
 - b. But there's **nothing** domineering or authoritarian in this.
 - c. They are **equal partners** with different tasks.
 - d. This is called **Complementarity**; a husband & wife, while equal in essence, have different roles that complement each other.
 - e. How this all plays out we'll dig into in the coming weeks.
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8. Some modern commentators claim a wife's placement under her husband's authority comes as a **result** of the Fall & curse.
- a. They say that **originally** they were **equal in authority** & that as Christians that arrangement is to be re-established.
 - b. But this ignores Paul's entire argument in 1 Cor. 11 that the husband's leadership is based in the order of creation – **Before** the Fall.
 - c. When people resist the Bible's pattern of authority in marriage, it means they don't understand what godly authority & submission look like.
 - d. I'm excited to share these things over the next weeks because I know from experience when people understand & live what it means for a husband to bear the responsibility for the marriage relationship & a wife to assist him, it's amazing.

A Covenant of Companionship

1. While God officiated at the marriage of Adam & Eve, Malachi 2:14 tells us what marriage *is*.

The LORD has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, with whom you have dealt treacherously; yet she is your companion and your wife by covenant.

- a. God takes the men of Israel to task because they're casually divorcing to marry others.
 - b. This verse gives us tremendous insight into how God sees marriage & what He intends it to be → It is a **covenant of companionship**.
 - c. Malachi says the wife is the man's **companion** by **covenant**.
2. A **covenant** is a legally-binding agreement. It's more than a **contract**.
- a. A **contract** is a promise to perform some **duty**.
 - b. A **covenant** is a promise to **become personally** involved.
 - c. When you buy a car, you sign a loan contract & promise to make monthly payments.
 - 1) The bank expects you to send in the money.
 - 2) It doesn't want you to go personally to home of the president & cook dinner every night.
 - 3) There's nothing **personal** about a contract; it's just business.
 - d. A **covenant** is an agreement to enter a **relationship** where **partners share their lives**.
3. There are 2 vital components to every covenant.
- First** - Covenants are entered into **publicly**, in the presence of **witnesses** who can hold the covenant partners accountable for the promises they make.
- Second** - Covenants have a **unique ritual** that identifies them as **special & marks the beginning** of the new relationship.
4. This is why we ought not fiddle with the marriage ceremony or tinker w/traditions that set a wedding apart as special.
- a. A marriage begins w/the pledging of vows in front of witnesses.
 - b. It's sanctioned by a minister of the Gospel, authorized by God to seal the union in His sight.

The Goal of Marriage

1. We've seen the **purpose** of marriage & that it's a **covenant of companionship**. Now we turn to the **GOAL** or marriage →

²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. ²⁵ And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

1. There's an important guideline for Bible study called the **Rule of First Use**.
 - a. The first time we encounter something sets its pace throughout the rest of scripture.
 - b. These verses lay the foundation for our understanding of marriage.
2. V24 is the **summary** the Holy Spirit makes of it.
3. It's such a crucial passage **both** Jesus & Paul refer to it in their teaching on marriage.⁴
4. The last part of the verse tells us the **goal** of marriage is to become **one flesh**.
 - a. This "becoming" speaks of a **process**.

⁴ Matthew 19:3-9; Ephesians 5:28-31

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- b. A husband & wife don't become **completely** one the day they recite their vows & are declared married.
 - c. Their oneness **begins** at that point & carries on in the weeks, months, & years that follow.
5. Marriage is a **process** of "becoming" & the goal is **ONENESS**.
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6. Many connect the words "one flesh" to physical intimacy.
- a. That's included, but "one-flesh" means much more.
 - b. It speaks of 2 people, thru love, devotion & commitment blending their lives to make **a new life together**.
 - c. They don't cease to be individuals; but their individuality is taken up into something bigger & better than the sum of the parts.
 - d. Marriage takes on a life of its own that adds to & enhances the lives of the partners.
7. We've all experienced this marital oneness this way:
- a. Think about the married people you know.
 - b. It's difficult to think about one without thinking of their mate as well.
8. To be one flesh *does* means to be **intimate**; but that intimacy goes way beyond the physical.
- a. To be intimate means **to know & be known**.
 - b. Intimacy – "In to me → See."
9. We become one in marriage by growing in our knowledge of our mate & them growing in their knowledge of us.
10. That's why v25 has to be added ...

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

- a. For years I thought that was just a postscript describing their pre-sin innocence.
- b. It's much more than that. It's part of v24; showings the **kind** of intimacy God desires for a husband & wife.
- c. It's **complete**, holding nothing back, hiding nothing.
- d. Adam & Eve were without sin, & because of that, there was no shame.
- e. They could be in one another's presence completely open & transparent.
- f. Their nakedness went past their bodies to their **souls**.
 - 1) How difficult is it to stare into someone's eyes?
 - 2) Most can only do it for a short while before they grow uncomfortable.
 - 3) We can be fully clothed yet there's an intense feeling of being laid bare.
 - 4) The eyes are the window of the soul.
 - 5) When someone looks us in the eyes, we feel like they are looking into **us**, seeing what's inside & that's freaky, so we look away.
 - 6) Adam & Eve were able to look into each other's eyes without any sense of hesitation or uneasiness.
- g. It wasn't till after the Fall they hid themselves & tried to cover their suddenly realized nakedness.
- h. Shame moved them to hide from God.
- i. Then, when God confronted Adam, he **shifted** the blame to Eve.
- j. He's already neglecting his role as the husband to take responsibility.

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11. But from the beginning, it was God's plan that a husband & wife be one, in a relationship unmarred & unhindered by guilt & shame.
 12. The goal of marriage remains the same.
 - a. God desires a husband & a wife to be one; to be intimate, to know & to be known without shame or the fear of rejection.
 - b. It's God's plan that a husband & wife love & be committed to one another despite their faults & failures.
 13. Deep in every one of our hearts is the **need** to be known & loved, despite our faults.
 - a. Until we find that, **loneliness** haunts us.
 - b. We each **long / ache** to go back to the Garden from which we were banned.
 - c. **Marriage** is the place God has given us to discover what was lost in the Eden.
 - d. It's the place He's given us to know & experience the power of His love & forgiveness in a relationship with someone else.
 14. The fact is, **until** we find that kind of intimacy, however halting & imperfect, we'll feel the pain of loneliness.
 15. Marriage doesn't guarantee an end to loneliness.
 - a. Some are married but still lonely.
 - b. Sadly, a marriage marked by shame & rejection makes it worse.
 16. Some of you have never understood either the **purpose** or **goal** of marriage.
 - a. You got married however long ago because you were "in love."
 - b. But the feelings have changed; they've cooled & in some cases turned to ashes of regret.
 - c. Since you got married because you were in love, now you no longer feel that way, you wonder **why** you're still married.
 - d. I have an important word for you: Don't bail because feelings have changed.
 - e. Your marriage possesses incredible potential.
 - f. Your mate knows you better than anyone else. And you know him/her better than anyone.
 - g. You might say, "EXACTLY! I don't **like** what I know. The knowing has not been good."
 - h. It's that very challenge God can turn into blessing.
 - i. He's giving you the chance to love your mate IN SPITE of all that stuff.
 - j. Just like God **loves you** in spite of all **your** stuff.
 - k. Besides, isn't there stuff you want your mate to love **you** in spite of?
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Holy, Not Happy

1. This is the Key: Marriage isn't the issue; there's something **else** that come **first**.
2. Before there was Adam & Eve, there was Adam → & God. // Marriage comes **after** God.
3. A moment ago I said the **goal of marriage** was to become one.
4. But a husband & wife can only become one when they have the highest priority & **first** relationship right – with God.
5. Marriage isn't **only** a process of becoming one with our spouse, it's a means by which the Spirit reveals our brokenness to us, shows us our selfishness, moves us to confess, repent, & cast ourselves on Him for help.
6. God certainly wants our marriage to be a source of happiness, but that is not its **primary** aim.

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7. **Holiness**, not happiness is what God is after.
 8. Some of you regret being married & want out because you expected your spouse to make you happy & they haven't.
 - a. Maybe for a while it was fun, but it's not now.
 - b. So you're thinking it's time to bail & find a new pony to ride.
 - c. Some of you have already done that; you're riding the new pony & it's not so exciting as you hoped.
 9. The problem isn't who you're married to; it's **you**.
 - a. You're looking for a man or woman to give you what only God can.
 - b. You may even be a Christian, but you still think it's all about you.
 - c. You've made **happiness** your goal, instead of **holiness**.
 10. Stop demanding your mate make you happy & rather, offer yourself to God to be His servant in your marriage & watch how things change.
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CONCLUSION

Summary

1. As we conclude, let me quickly sum up what we've looked at, then pose a few questions.
2. Marriage is a **covenant of companionship** which thru **increasing intimacy** allows a husband & wife to grow in their relationship with God & one another.

Questions

1. So, are you a **companion** to your mate? Do you **share life** together? Are you **companions** or mere **room-mates**?
2. Are you working to remove **feelings of loneliness** in your mate? Or do you add to his/her loneliness?
3. Do you **consistently** show a **loving acceptance** & care for him/her,
 - a. Or are you **critical & judgmental**?
 - b. Do you **ignore** him/her?
4. Has your marriage become a mere routine of living together?
5. If you could 'grade' your marriage in regard to **companionship**, what grade would you give it?
 - a. Pick a grade then talk with your mate about it.
 - b. What can you do together that would raise your grade?

You Need Jesus

1. In the weeks to come we'll look at how to deepen intimacy & deal with challenges to it.
2. We'll look at the role of the husband & the wife.
3. But all of this presumes you have the presence and power of the Holy Spirit at work in your life.
4. Everything we're considering can only be lived by those who are in right relationship with God.
5. Unless the **vertical** is in right alignment, the **horizontal** won't be.
6. The marriage we're describing requires a healthy dose of trust & forgiveness.
7. Where are you going to get that?
8. You're fooling yourself if you think you have it in sufficient supply to meet your mate's needs
9. God will **use** your marriage to bring you to the end of yourself so that you might become the channel through which He can manifest **His** love & forgiveness.