

Two Into One • Part 7: Challenges to Intimacy II

Gen 2:21-25

1. Adam is wandering round Eden, amazed by the beauty.
 2. Everything is new, fresh, pristine! The colors, scents, sounds, flavors are overwhelming.
 3. He wishes he had someone to share it all with.
 4. God see that and says to him, “Adam, I’m going to make you a companion.”
 5. He replies, “Thank you, God. What will she be like?”
 6. God says, “She’ll be perfect! She’ll cook and clean.
She’ll have your children and never ask you to get up in the middle of the night to feed or change them.
She’ll never complain & never have a headache.”
 7. Adam says, “Super! What’s that going to cost me?”
 8. God replied, “An arm and a leg.”
 9. Adam paused then said, “That’s a bit much. What can I get for a rib?” And the rest – is history.
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1. Gen 2:18 = The purpose of marriage is to solve the problem of loneliness.
 2. v. 24 = The goal of marriage is for two to become one.
 - a. By which we mean **intimacy**; in body, soul & spirit.
 - b. To know & be known with no fear of shame or rejection
 3. Last Sunday we took a look at 2 of the main challenges to intimacy many couples face: Conflict & Money.
 4. Today we look at two more: Leaving & Cleaving, and Sex.
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THE CHALLENGE OF FAMILY

Leave to Cleave

1. An important route TO intimacy is found there in v24 -

Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

2. Hold on! This comes right after the marriage of Adam & Eve, who didn’t have parents.
 3. Right. But that first marriage is the template for all others.
 4. What this says is that marriage is an **exclusive** relationship that’s **so intimate**, even the relationship with our parents is altered by it.
 5. The proper order for a marriage is that →
 - a. A man **first leaves** his parents & establishes himself **independently** of them, proving he can take on & provide for a wife.
 - b. Having done so, he then **joins** to his wife.
 - c. Which he does by **pursuing her devotedly** as we saw a few weeks ago in the message on Communication.
 6. It’s important the man follow this pattern: Leave parents, pursue wife.
 - a. He has to come out from under his identity as a son of his mommy & daddy.
 - b. The son must be a Man who not only takes care of himself; he’s capable of taking care of a wife.
 - c. Then, **HE** pursues **her**, so that their relationship gets off on the right foot.
He’s the leader, the **initiator**; the one who’s taking responsibility.
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7. This verse is so important both Jesus & Paul repeated it.¹

Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

8. The Old King James is more poetic

A man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

1. **Marital** intimacy is **exclusive**.
 - a. It draws a line around the husband & wife no loyalty or affection may compete with.
 - b. If there's tension or a question of loyalty, marriage must always win.

2. When a man & woman wed, there's a fundamental change in the rel. w/their parents.
 - a. The loyalty & solidarity that used to go to parents is moved to the spouse.
 - b. While the man is identified in v24 as the one who leaves & pursues, once they say "I do" what he's already done in leaving his parents she follows by leaving hers.
 - c. In v24 it says "**they**" → The husband & wife become one, not the husband & wife **& her parents**.
3. A major challenge to intimacy comes when there's a **failure** to leave mom & dad.
 - a. When the apron strings aren't cut,
 - b. & **either** the husband or wife tries to hold on to their parents.
 - c. **Or** → Those parents try to hold on to them.
4. Some parents just won't let go.
 - a. After the wedding they want to keep their influence & control of their son or daughter.
 - b. They call every other day or drop by to say "Hi."
 - c. But they aren't there to say "Hi." They want to know what's going on.
 - d. They're forever giving their opinion about this & that decision the couple makes.
 - e. Mom doesn't like the way her daughter-in-law keeps house; so she comes by to "help-out."
 - f. Dad doesn't like the way his little girl is being treated, so he reminds her if things get bad, she can always come home.
 - g. Reminds me of the young man who wanted to get married.
 - 1) He introduced his girlfriend to his mother. Mom didn't like her.
 - 2) Nor the 2nd and 3rd girlfriends he introduced.
 - 3) Finally, he found one who **looked** like his mother, **dressed** like her, **talked** like her & **acted** like her.
 - 4) When he introduced her to his parents, his **father** didn't like her.
5. Leaving mother & father means just that. Once you've married, there's no going home!
 - a. You have a NEW home & that's where you belong.
 - b. The loyalty you once gave your parents belongs to your spouse.
6. Husbands & wives need to make sure parents don't interfere in their marriage.
7. Don't allow a lingering attachment to your parents to sap the strength of intimacy with your spouse.
 - a. Some people give the expectations of parents and siblings a higher priority than their mate's.
 - b. Never neglect your husband or wife in favor of your parents.
8. Now: There's surely push-back from some who say, "What about the 5th Commandment to honor your parents?"
 - a. Of course we're to honor them.
 - b. But **THEY** are to honor the marriage of their children too.

¹ Matthew 19:5 Ephesians 5:30

- c. And the bond between a wife & husband **trumps** that between a parent and child.

Practical Application

1. Let's consider *how* this can be applied in practical ways.
2. In PM counseling, we cover leaving and cleaving.
 - a. I ask, "How's your relationship w/your parents? Are they going to be a problem?" // Most say "No."
 - b. Then I ask; "Where will you spend Christmas."
 - c. Many answer w/o thinking. Simultaneously they say, "At my folk's."
 - d. Then they look at each other & it hits them.
 - e. Here's an issue of blending they never thought of.
 - f. They've always spent Christmas **at home** → Meaning their **parent's** home.
 - g. But being married means having you own home.
 - h. Since the holidays are a major memory-building time where family is so important, why not honor the principle of leaving & cleaving by celebrating the holidays in YOU home, building your own, unique memories?
 - j. Sure; **visit** family during the holidays, but invest in **your** marriage by making it a special time for you as a couple & a new family.
3. Here's another way this principle is applied:
 - a. Parents need to recognize the **boundaries** that define your marriage & honor them.
 - b. They **aren't** free to give their opinion about how your marriage unless you ask for it.
 - 1) Mom shouldn't call her darling little boy & tell him she doesn't like his wife.
 - 2) Dad can't tell his little girl her husband's a loser.
 - 3) He might be, but dad doesn't have the right to say such a thing.
4. A husband or wife shouldn't make plans w/parents, **then** inform their mate.
5. Parents must honor the sanctity of their married children's homes & not just walk in w/o knocking.

Children - Eph 5:31-6:4

1. The exclusivity of marriage revealed in Gen. 2:24 applies in **another** direction as well.
2. Just as a husband & wife need to maintain independence from their **parents**, they must **protect their solidarity & loyalty** to one another from their children.
3. Eph. 5:31-6:4 says -

³¹ **"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."** ³² This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. ³³ Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects *her* husband. ¹ Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² **"Honor your father and mother,"** which is the first commandment with promise: ³ **"that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."** ⁴ And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

4. Note the progression of relationships. It **starts** with marriage **then** goes to children & parents.
5. In God's plan, children come from a committed relationship between a husband & wife.
6. They're the fruit of a marriage. But the marriage **comes first**
7. Just as marital intimacy can be hindered by nosy parents, it can be hindered by children who become the main focus of a parent's attention.
8. One of the best things parents can do for children is to make their marriage exclusive, solid, & secure.
9. Children draw far more security from parents in a healthy, loving relationship than anything else.
10. **Moms especially** need to keep a balance here.
 - a. The bond between a mother & child is profound. Giving birth does that.

- b. So moms need to be especially careful to make sure they're not draining themselves of their emotional & physical energy in the care of their children so they have nothing left for their husbands.
 - c. Fathers can make sure of that by **helping** their wives w/the children.
11. Parents, when you're speaking to each other, don't let the kids interrupt.
12. If children grow up with this model for marriage, it'll help them get a better grasp on how **their** marriage is to be a leaving & cleaving.

Friends & Other Interests

- 1. If **marriage** is so exclusive it draws a line that redefines our relationship with our parents & siblings, what does that say about friends or hobbies?
- 2. It means we need to make sure there's **no competition** in our affection & loyalty to our mates.
 - a. If hanging out with the guys or gals after work keeps you out late - go home.
 - b. If bowling, line dancing, softball, bingo, whatever keeps you away from your mate, drop it.
- 3. Marital intimacy requires an investment of time & energy.
- 4. The rewards are spectacular, but the work is real.

THE CHALLENGE OF SEX – Gen 2

- 1. Now for the last challenge to Intimacy we'll look at → Sex.
- 2. The Goal of marriage is to be one. To be intimate. For many, intimacy **means** sex.
- 3. As God intends it, sexual intercourse is just one aspect of marital intimacy; It's **physical** expression.
- 4. Now, we need to be careful as we deal with this for obvious reasons.
- 5. But I want to be faithful with God's Word & not deviate from Scripture.
- 6. Because of the Church's reluctance to deal w/this subject we've left a vacuum the world has rushed to fill.
- 7. No matter where you turn, sexually-oriented material is in your face.
 - a. Billboards, ads, TV, radio, & fashions; they all push sex.
 - b. Our eyes & ears are barraged by an onslaught of provocative images & sounds.
 - c. Sex is a powerful marketing tool used to sell everything from toothpaste to trucks.
- 8. You'd think with all this preoccupation with sex, people would be **satisfied**. They aren't.
- 9. The **opposite** is the case. But that's no surprise to us.
- 10. People **aren't** satisfied because they've rejected God's Word which tells us the purpose for sex.
- 11. We find it here in Genesis 2:24

Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

- a. Sex is the **physical** consummation of marital intimacy.
 - b. Taking sex out of marriage rips it from its right setting.
 - c. As a fish belongs in water, sex belongs in marriage.
 - 1) Take a fish out of water, it flops around for a while, then dies.
 - 2) Take sex outside marriage, it's just flopping around till something inside us dies.
 - d. What dies is our capacity to **be** genuinely intimate; to enjoy the sharing of our whole person.
 - e. Because sex isn't just an act of the body. It's a profoundly soulful & spiritual act.
12. Corinth was exceedingly licentious, a sex-drenched city.
Listen to what the Apostle Paul tells them in 1 Cor. 6:15–20

¹⁵ Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not! ¹⁶ Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For "the two," He says, "shall become one flesh." ¹⁷ But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. ¹⁸ Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins

against his own body. ¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? ²⁰ For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

1. Sex outside marriage is off-limits precisely because it involves the whole person, not just the body.
2. It's great for marriage because what you give **stays** with you in the spouse.
3. Remember: A husband and wife are COMPANIONS who become ONE.
4. Sex outside marriage gives a piece of yourself away → And you'll never get it back. It's gone.
5. IN marriage// And here's what we need to key in on //
Sex is a means, a tool God's given for a couple to deepen their intimacy, body & soul.

Hebrews 13:4

Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

1. Marriage is **honorable**. It's **not** an outdated, old fashioned idea whose day has past.
2. The marriage bed is **undefiled**.
 - a. "Bed" is "coite" from which we get the word **coitus** = sexual intercourse.
 - b. The KJ translators found too strong so they blunted it.
3. Marriage is honorable & physical intimacy between a husband & wife is **clean** before God.
4. That's the proper domain of sex → Marriage.
5. Sex **outside** of marriage is condemned.
6. I'm tired of the unending mantra in popular media marital sex is boring while extra-marital sex is where all the fun's at. // That's a LIE
7. Christians need to refute it w/a healthy dose of the truth.
8. Marital sex is great! God says so! It is clean & undefiled before Him.
9. Don't forget: Sex is God's idea.
 - a. **He** created us w/these bodies.
 - b. So important is sex to what it means to be human God made it one of our basic **drives**.
 - c. Breath, thirst, hunger → sex.
 - d. The first 3 ensure our **individual** survival; the sex-drive ensures survival of the race.
 - e. Just as there's a right, a holy way to fulfill the desire for air, water, & food, there's a holy way to fulfill the sex-drive = Marriage!
10. But Satan, aiming to mess up God's good gifts corrupts desire.
 - a. He pollutes the air; turns thirst & hunger into addiction.
 - b. Sex, he turns to lust & makes untold millions slaves.
11. **God's** plan is for sex to be a pleasurable part of a marriage.
12. So of course, it comes in for the attention by satan.
 - a. He does this by pressuring us into sex **before & outside** marriage.
 - b. He wants to put memories & images into our minds difficult to erase.
 - c. That way, when we marry, he can beat us over the head w/them.
 - 1) Either by creating feelings of shame & guilt -
 - 2) Or causing us to compare our mate w/some other experience or image.
 - d. How like the devil; he seduces us to sin, & once we do, condemns us for it!
13. What are we to do? // First, remember ...
 - a. Sex is God's gift to marriage. There, it's all good.

- b. If sex seems unholy or dirty, ask the Holy Spirit to get at the root of that & ask Him to give you HIS perspective on this part of your marriage.
 - c. Your heart needs to be healed & your mind renewed by the Lord.
14. I understand you may have a dark & ugly past. We live in a perverse age.
- a. Some here were molested as children.
 - b. Before some came to Christ they were sexually promiscuous.
 - c. The salvation Jesus won is for the **whole** person; to make us whole men & women; & that healing reaches into who we are as male & female, as sexual beings.
 - d. Don't let the devil keep this part of who you are locked in his grip.
 - e. Our sexual identity belongs to God. We need to make sure He's **Lord over it**.
 - f. 1 John 3:8 says Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil.
 - g. In Christ, God can restore the years the sin reigned.

1 Corinthians 7:1-5

1. We conclude with a quick look at a passage we looked at last week, 1 Cor. 7

¹ Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.

2. Touch is a euphemism for intimate physical relations.

² Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. ³ Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. ⁴ The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.

1. Paul's instructions were revolutionary to the time –
 - a. To suggest men **owed** a duty of affection to their wives →
 - b. & that a wife had authority over her husband's body was utterly outside conventional wisdom.
2. Paul says **both** husbands & wives **owe** sexual satisfaction to one another.
 - a. God gives a man to a woman in marriage that **she** might know sexual satisfaction, & vice versa.
 - b. Sir; your body belongs to your wife. Ma'am; your body belongs to your husband.
 - c. So, we should be good stewards of our bodies so they can be pleasurable to our mates.
3. This suggests we're talking to each other about all this.
 - a. Do you communicate about sex?
 - b. Do you share with each other what's satisfying & pleasurable?
 - c. Or is your love-making marked by silence & embarrassment?
4. Note how Paul ends v5 ...

⁵ Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

1. Sexual relations in marriage ought to be **consistent & regular**.
 - a. Inevitably people ask, "What's regular? How often?"
 - b. And the answer is → // There is no answer to that!
 - c. What's regular for one couple would wear another out.
 - d. Regular is determined by the 2 of you as you share & blend.
 2. Paul says "**Do not deprive one another.**"
 3. Sex must never be used as a weapon or means of manipulation.
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CONCLUSION - Marriage's Potential

1. We'll conclude the marriage series next Sunday with probably the most important message.
2. How marriage is a picture of our relationship with Jesus.
3. There's a lifetime of coaching we can take for our marriage from Jesus & His bride – the Church.
4. That's next Sunday.
5. This coming Wednesday, we get started back in our regular course in 1 Samuel and the fascinating story of David.