

G P S

For Grandparents, Parents and Seniors

By Rick Shrader

The Creation of Marriage

The creation account of human beings and the dominion given to Adam and Eve necessitated the creation of marriage. Human beings were made male and female to marry and reproduce and the creation order placed Adam as the protector of the family and Eve as the mother of all living. Marriage thus became the foundation for any civilized society. We may recognize four key elements to marriage.

Marriage is sacred (Gen. 2:18-22). Marriage was created by God before sin entered into His perfect creation. He designed it to be made up of a man and a woman. Adam was made first as the head and of the family and Eve was made from Adam as the perfect helper. God officiated the first wedding by bringing the new bride to Adam (2:22) and He was the official witness to the public ceremony. God commissioned the marriage, commanding the man to leave father and mother (an indication that this would be repeated continually) and take his wife with him. Jesus blessed this union saying, "Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate" (Matt 19:6).

Marriage is ordered (Gen. 1:26-28). The orderly make-up of the family is seen in the fact that Adam was created in God's image as the head, husband, and father of the family and Eve was made from the man as helper, wife, and mother in that same divine image. Thereafter, children would be born in the image of God (5:3) to carry on the family responsibilities throughout human history. The adorning (differentiation) of the family members would become increasingly important as sin deteriorated the family distinctions. We see this immediately after the fall (3:21) and later in 1 Cor. 11:1-16 and 1 Pet 3:3,5.

Marriage is covenantal (Gen. 2:23-25). Marriage is proper for the entire human race. Secular society necessarily makes marriage a contract (license) but contracts are often broken. The Roman church makes marriage a sacrament but answerable to the church. God made marriage a covenant answerable to Him as witness. The Bible describes a covenant as: the wife's covenant of her God (Prov. 2:17); the husband's wife by covenant (Mal. 2:14); and Israel as God's wife by covenant (Ezek. 16:8). Whether the marriage ceremony includes a license (which it should) or the blessing of a local church (which it should), it is always seen by God as a covenant that should not be broken. Marriage has two parts: a public consent made with serious vows before God and witnesses (Gen. 2:23); and a private consummation of the physical union (Gen. 2:25).

Marriage is symbolic (Eph. 5:22-33). In Paul's longest explanation of marriage he says, "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (Eph. 5:32). God knew from eternity that the Son would have a bride who would be joined to Him throughout eternity. Our consent to this union is our profession of faith and our consummation will be when He takes us to the Father's house. The celebration supper will last for a thousand years where the Groom and bride reign over the grand reception.

Kevin DeYoung said, "Ephesians 5 may be about marriage, but we can't make sense of the underlying logic unless we note God's intentions in creating marriage as a gospel-shaped union" (*Men and Women in the Church*, p. 14). A biblical marriage between a man and a woman, rightly ordered and sealed by God, is a pattern of, and a witness to, the biblical picture of the marriage of believers to Christ.

Book Review:

Preparing Children for Marriage

By Josh Mulvihill

Mulvihill has written a lot on grandparenting and parenting. This is a new addition to his list of subjects in that genre, and a welcome addition for young parents. The book is divided into four parts:

1) Getting Started. Start your children out very young understanding biblical principles of relationships. Mulvihill starts this section with an introduction to SIECUS (Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States). This government agency has been printing guidelines for public school education for over a decade. Every parent should be aware of what (immorality) is being taught to their children.

2) Marriage. Seven chapters on what God says marriage is, and preparing even young children for the time when they will marry. This section defines marriage as a covenant created by God. It has seven chapters on teaching sons and daughters to prepare for a godly marriage. It is the largest section of the book.

3) Sex and Purity. How to use biblical verses and passages on teaching sex to your children. In this section he promotes using clear biblical language to young children about sex because, he argues, the Scripture is for everyone. "The first thing we learn about sex from the Bible is that *God created it* (Gen 2:24). Don't skip over this point with your children."

4) Dating. The purpose for dating is marriage. Mulvihill is very specific that the only purpose for dating is the selection of a good candidate for marriage. He also is very insistent on the parent's role in overseeing this process. "Dating should be a Christ-centered relationship between a man and a woman meant to help a couple discern marital compatibility with each other."

Though I may not be as specific in every area, Mulvihill does a good job of encouraging parents in the importance of raising their children with the view of a biblical marriage. Past generations have had the privilege of waiting until children were older, even in the later teen years, before preparing them for sexual temptation and other cultural pitfalls. Today's parents don't have that luxury because of the exposure today's teens have to an ungodly culture.

Statistics:

Two More States Approve Universal School Voucher Programs by Anna Merod.

In a recent survey of 3,820 parents by the "National School Choice Awareness Foundation," 31.5% said they considered enrolling their children in public charter schools, 29.1% thought about private or religious schools, while 22.9% looked at homeschooling and 20.8% mulled over full-time virtual instruction.

Iowa and Utah in late January became the second and third states to enact universal education savings account programs, following in Arizona's footsteps from summer 2022.

The \$42.5 million Utah law paired the state's new universal education savings account program for K-12 students with an \$8,400 annual teacher salary boost. The law's "Utah Fits All Scholarship Program" will take effect in the 2024-25 school year and provide eligible students not enrolled full time in a public school with up to \$8,000 per year in scholarship funds.

In Iowa, Gov. Kim Reynolds signed into law the "Students First Act" creating an education savings account for K-12 students who want to attend private schools. Eligibility for the expected \$7,598 annual scholarships per student will open up to all K-12 students in the state, regardless of income, by the 2025-26 school year. The program's estimated cost ranges from \$106.9 million in 2024 up to \$344.9 million in 2026.

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Note: "K-12 Dive provides in-depth journalism and insight into the most impactful news and trends shaping K-12 education." (From Editorial page, *K12div.com*)

A Grandmother's Test

I didn't know if my granddaughter had learned her colors yet, so I decided to test her. I would point out something and ask what color it was. She would tell me and was always correct. It was fun for me, so I continued. At last, she headed for the door, saying, "Grandma, I really think you should try to figure out some of these colors yourself!"