



## The Model For Marriage

We often encounter circumstances in life that are extremely difficult and because of this we often wish that they hadn't ever happened. In recent weeks we have been considering the institution of marriage as designed by God and the ever-increasing decisions by many to 'put asunder what God has joined together'. Some have even sought to use the terms "annulment" or "dissolution" so that the stigma of "divorce" can be avoided. Regardless of what it is called, it is still the 'putting away' of a spouse and was not meant to be, even from the beginning. It is my opinion the decision to divorce can be minimized by viewing the marriage relationship consistent with the divine pattern and selecting a spouse who shares the same view. It is difficult for some to believe, but there are those who require counseling prior to marriage, hoping to minimize the risk of future divorces. Let's see what scripture shares with us that could help us in marriage.

Are you aware of the parallel in scripture to the marriage relationship that places our Creator in a partnership with His followers? God calls Himself the husband of Israel (Isaiah 54:5-6; Jeremiah 31:32), and calls attention to their breaking the covenant they made with Him. In New Testament passages we see Jesus placed in the position of bridegroom in a number of places to include John the Baptist describing Jesus as the groom with a bride and himself as the friend of the groom (John 3:29), and Jesus calling Himself a groom when John's disciples ask why His disciples did not fast (Matt 9:14-15), the parable of the wedding feast (Matt 22:1-14), and the parable of the virgins sent to meet the groom. Ephesians 5 describes the family relationship including the husband/wife and in closing Paul makes the connection of Christ and the church and the corresponding roles each fulfills (vs. 32). The evidence is too strong to be ignored; God desires a special relationship with His followers. The disciples of His Son, Jesus, are the church, the bride of Christ, and the role each has is special as well. Are you beginning to see the parallel between the two relationships?

Permit me to submit for your consideration, 1 John 4:20. "If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen." (NAS) The comparison is, "Can we sustain a relationship with a God we can't see, if we cannot do the same with a spouse we can see?"