



The Blessed Marriage Robert Morris

Focus Marriage represents God on earth, Christ and the Church, and covenant.

Fun During this time of year, many families have special fall traditions. What tradition is significant to your family and why?

Review Key Scriptures: Matthew 19:3–8

1. **Marriage represents God on earth.**

In Matthew 19, when the Pharisees asked Jesus if it was lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason, Jesus replied, “Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning made them male and female ... and the two shall become one flesh. So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.” When God created a marriage between a male and a female, it reflected His image. In the same way the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are *one*, a husband, a wife, and God are also *one*. God put a mirror of Himself on earth through marriage.

2. **Marriage represents Christ and the Church.**

Ephesians 5 states that marriage represents Christ and the Church. Husbands are supposed to be declaring to the world how Jesus treats His bride, the Church. Wives are supposed to be declaring to the world how we as the Church show honor and respect to Christ. If we are not modeling this in marriage, we are not accurately reflecting this truth to the world.

3. **Marriage represents covenant.**

Marriage is a covenant we enter before God and other witnesses. A covenant is *not* a contract. In a contract you try to protect your rights and limit your responsibilities. In a covenant, you lay down your rights and pick up your

responsibilities. In a healthy marriage, a husband and wife show the world how God keeps a covenant. God always keeps his covenant with us. Jesus kept our side of the covenant with God, and when we believe in what Jesus did, we enter into a covenant relationship with God.

Group Dynamics Idea Everybody loves to have fun! Pick a time to have a game night. There are lots of fun things you can do: games, cards, charades, scavenger hunts, escape rooms, or theme parks. Often the best way to build relationships and get to know each other is to have fun.

Discuss

1. Read Matthew 19:3–8. What stands out to you in these Scriptures? How would you have responded if you were there that day when Jesus gave these answers?
2. Why do you think God would choose marriage between a husband and wife to reflect Himself on earth?
3. What aspects of men and women reflect the nature of God? How do these individualities complement each other?
4. How would a husband treat his wife to reflect how Jesus treats the Church?
5. How would a wife talk to her husband to reflect how we should talk to Christ?
6. What is the difference between a marriage based on contract versus a marriage based on covenant? How does this reflect God's covenant with us?
7. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you through this message? If you are married, are there areas of your marriage that need adjustment, so they reflect God on earth? Are you treating your spouse in a way that reflects Christ and the Church? If you're single, are you living in a way that shows the world who the Father is—the same way Jesus did while He lived single on earth? If not, what are some steps you can take to change?

Take Home As we conclude, remember the following:

- Marriage between a man and a woman is designed to reflect God on earth.
- Marriage reflects the way Christ is with the Church.
- Marriage reflects covenant.

Prayer Heavenly Father, we thank You for creating marriage to reflect who You are on earth. Help our marriages mirror who You are to the world. Help us to treat our spouses with love. We also pray that You would strengthen and bless marriages in our nation. In Jesus' name, Amen.

New Leader Tip Marriage can be a difficult topic to discuss, either because people have been through difficult divorces, are having marriage challenges, or are single and talking about marriage may be awkward. Be sensitive to those dynamics. Make sure your conversations are inclusive and encourage people wherever they are in their journey of life. It is often a great opportunity to pray and support each other. Also, if there are people in your group struggling in their marriages, direct them to Gateway's Marriage Challenge. For times and locations, visit marriage.gatewaypeople.com. This can be a great resource for those needing help.