

Preparations for Future Marriages – Gen 2:18-24

Parenting in the Promises #8

Introduction – We began this series by saying, “It is grace that they are born; sheer grace that they are born again. It is grace that they know the Lord; sheer grace that they walk in His ways. While we certainly can teach principles in childrearing from the Scriptures, we must always remember that success in childrearing is all grace, from grace to grace; and our boasting must always be in the Lord (Gal 6:14).” We have seen that it is all of grace in every aspect and challenge of their lives, and this includes the grace of God in the work of courtship and marriage – for our children.

God-Given Need and Attraction (Gen 2:18-24) – It is good and proper attitude for a woman to desire to be married and for a man to pursue a woman for the purpose of marriage. This is all tied to the Story of the purpose of mankind and the salvation of the world. It is tied as well to the promises to us and our children (Gen 12:3, Deut 7:9). God made man in such a way that it was not good for him to live before God all by himself (Gen 2:18) and this didn't mean he should just have a bunch of pets (vv19-20 – *sorry Seattle, home of more pets than children per capita*). In order to receive the kind of helper Adam needed, God required that Adam completely trust Him and “die,” only to be resurrected to find that God had kept His promises and better (vv21-23). This becomes a pattern for all husbands who are to follow the first and second Adam's example, laying their lives down for their wives (Eph 5:25-30). This become the story of the future grace of the world in marriages and in the body of Christ (v24, Eph 5:31-32).

One Flesh – Scripture teaches three basic purposes for marriage: companionship in culture-building (Gen 2:18), godly children (Mal 2:15), and sexual fidelity (1 Cor 7:2, Heb 13:4). And so the act of marriage has a public portion, a public declaration of faithfulness in the assigned roles of husband and wife by a man and a woman, before the face of God and man. It is also an intimate, private, yet publicly acknowledged portion (Gen 2:24, Song of Songs) for at its center is sexual union protected in the bonds of public vows.

Getting Them Ready (2 Cor 11:2-3) – Paul, representing the Father, is passionate about taking responsibility for his “daughter” until she is presented to Christ as “bride.” A father is jealous for the purity of his daughter; this is not a sign of an overbearing father, but of godly love. It is just at this point that our culture (and the church-culture) needs to repent. Unlike Paul, we say “we don't care,” “it doesn't make any difference,” or “it's none of my business anymore” and that is a lie straight from the pit.

A Different Culture – The pattern we learn from this and throughout the scriptures (i.e. Ps 78:63, Matt 24:38) is that men marry and women are given in marriage. This requires young men to become responsible covenant heads prior to marrying, and for women to be honored through covenant security, protection and love at all times. This is not an option for fathers (and mothers too). It is not a question of whether you oversee a courtship process or not; it is whether or not you do so according to the Word and with a view to the promises or not.

Preparing Sons – A son's preparation begins with his own devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ, which must be thorough in doctrine *and* practice. He is to learn from his father how to speak to his wife, and how to love, care for, honor and live with her in an understanding way.

Thinking Covenantally – He must be prepared to be an initiator and one who takes responsibility. He must be one who has learned to work sacrificially for others and to work hard. He must understand that his duty is to pursue her by pursuing *her father*, and that he should not even begin to think of doing so until he is prepared to take the authority he is seeking to be transferred.

Proverbs 5 Men – He is to know that sexual hunger is a gift from God. He should also learn that he doesn't get to eat for several years. He is to be a self-disciplined man in all of his passions, this one included. He should shudder at the thought of sexual relations or fathering a child outside of the protection of the covenant of marriage. He should fear God.

Learning to be a Gentleman – Even if a boy is not yet prepared to pursue a young lady, there is no excuse for acting like a jerk to the women around him. He is required to show honor in a general way to all women. They are neighbors to be loved according to the second commandment, and he must learn from his parents how to do that in appropriate ways.

Preparing Daughters – Contrary to popular, even pop-Christian, opinion, God has built her in such a way that she wants to be given by a godly man to a godly man. Her preparation should work out what God is putting in.

A Man to Respect – If she has grown up for years watching her father love her mother and sacrificially serve the family, she will naturally stay under his authority whenever an interested man calls. She will keep the standards her father has lived, not necessarily what he has said.

Godly Rudeness – A girl should never be rude for rudeness' sake. But she should be taught how to give a godly cold shoulder at appropriate times because the glory of God, the reputation of her father, and the honor of a Christian virgin are at stake. Also, she should grow up being a life-giver and nurturer – but she may not marry a “project.”

Under Her Father – All of her activities are her father's responsibility in a way different than that of her brother at the same age. Therefore, the rules may be different. Even the godly, upright, Christian man will be directed to her father and not simply to her. In that trusting relationship with her father, she will find protection to send away those who are not qualified, cold water realism when she has been swooned, and careful scrutiny over time of a potential suitor who will love her as her father does.

God's Grace at the Center – The subject of courtship, the Bible-passages, the principles and then the specific applications for your family, should produce much and ongoing discussion in your home. It is a subject that should be gone over and over again with a view to what God has promised and what God is doing. Anyone honestly listening to this sermon (and this series) is convicted of their own shortcomings and sins in these areas. And so, we must always remember the grace of God, available to all, as we stumble, struggle, and are sanctified in this work (1 Cor 6:9-11).