



SERMON GUIDE

# Marriage Made in Heaven



Touching Lives with Dr. James Merritt

# Introduction

## Key Points

## 1. Remember That Marriage Is a Divine Idea

## Notes





**Remember that marriage was God's ideal from the beginning, so be careful not to turn an ideal into an ordeal, and then look for a new deal.**

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Every other aspect of creation had its counterpart: Day had the sun, night had the moon, water had fish, sky had birds, and the ground had animals. But man had no partner. Before there was a man or woman, there was God, and He always intended to be Adam's first love. "So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh" (Genesis 2:21, NIV). See how God took the first woman from the man's side, to be by his side. Not above him, not below him, but beside him. "Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man" (Genesis 2:22, NIV). Notice that God brought Adam a woman, not a man. Consider also that according to God's design, there are only two genders, and they alone make up a true biblical marriage. From beginning to end, marriage has never primarily been about a woman and a man; it's been about God. Whose idea was this marriage? God's. Who planned it? God. Who provided the husband and presented the bride? God. Eve becomes the only bride given away by God Himself. God is still in the building business and the bringing business, and when you respect marriage as His initiative, you will receive the person and blessing He brings.

The only person you should ever consider marrying is the person you truly believe God has brought to you.



### 3. Respect Marriage As a Divine Institution

When God brings Eve to Adam, we see the actual wedding ceremony. “The man said, ‘This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called “woman,” for she was taken out of man’” (Genesis 2:23, NIV). The Hebrew word for woman (*Ishah*) comes from *anash* meaning “fragile,” while man (*Ish*) comes from *usah* which means “strength.” God built masculinity into men and femininity into women, and male and female are the only two pieces of the marriage puzzle that fit together. The phrase “suitable helper” uses the Hebrew *kenegdo*—a combination of *ke* (like) and *neged* (opposite). Eve is like Adam as a human created in God’s image, but different as a woman, not a man. “That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24, NIV). The Hebrew word “one” (*echad*) describes unity with diversity, like God being one yet three persons. There’s not uniformity, but there is unity. God’s divine institution is woven into the very DNA of humanity. God’s Word is not subject to change. What He has established in creation, He intends to transcend culture and time.

**Honor marriage as God's first institution, designed to be the foundation of family, which is the foundation of nations.**

## Key Takeaway

*Every marriage should be made in Heaven, manufactured by Heaven, and mastered by Heaven. When you put Christ at the head of your marriage, you'll have a marriage that's made in Heaven.*



# The Fire Starts Here

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*Marriage Made in Heaven | Week 43 | Genesis 2:18-25*

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## Reflection Questions

1. How does understanding that marriage was God's idea, not a human invention, change your view of its importance and design in today's culture?

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2. What does it mean practically to respect marriage as a divine institution in your daily life, whether you're single, married, or supporting others?

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3. What is one lesson from this study that will help you ensure that Christ remains at the center of your marriage or future marriage, making it truly "made in Heaven"?

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aligns with God's purposes. She can trust that whatever Jesus asks her to do is not just for her good; it's for her best and for His glory.

**Husbands and wives must both submit themselves to Christ. When you truly place Jesus as Lord over every area of your life, He will give you the peace and confidence to submit to one another.**

## 2. Wives, Be Respectfully Submissive to the Leadership of Your Husband

Marriage works when the husband and wife understand their roles. Paul says, “For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior” (Ephesians 5:23, NIV). The way the wife relates to the husband is the way the church is to relate to Jesus. Just as Jesus is the head of the church, the husband is the head of the wife. Now, the head of the church also gave His life for her; this is the model for every “head of the household” thereafter. Every plane needs a pilot, every ship needs a captain, and every train needs a conductor. The church submits to Jesus willingly because the church knows that Jesus loves her and wants only what is best for her. No woman should ever submit to a husband if he asks her to do anything unscriptural or immoral, and you should never submit to being physically or verbally abused. Submission is not about inferiority; it’s about maturity, responsibility, and authority. One of the greatest marks of maturity is when you’re willing to accept the responsibility of submitting to legitimate authority.

Submission doesn't limit you in any way; it actually frees you to be everything that God wants you to be.

## Notes







# Fanning the Flames (Part One)

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*Marriage Made in Heaven | Week 44 | Ephesians 5:21-24*

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## Reflection Questions

1. In what areas of life do you currently submit to authority without question? How does this help you understand that submission isn't meant to be demeaning, but is necessary for society to function?

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2. How does your relationship with Jesus as Lord affect your willingness to follow His design for marriage? What might need to change in your surrender to Him first?

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3. When you think about Christ's relationship with the church, what encourages you most about the kind of loving leadership a husband should provide? How does this picture help you understand God's design for marriage?

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What if finding the right person to marry isn't actually the secret to a happy marriage? Everyone wants a fairy-tale marriage, but it's a tragedy when fairy tales turn into horror stories because we misplace our expectations. The real problem is this: Every person wanting to get married is looking for the right person, but it will do you no good to find the right person if you are not the right person to be married to. That's why every marriage should begin with not just a husband and wife, but a *godly* husband and a *godly* wife. A marriage made in Heaven begins with a spouse given by Heaven. Learn the three specific things every heavenly-given husband must do for his wife to create a marriage that truly is happily ever after.

## Key Points

## 1. Provide Humble Leadership

What kind of leadership do you think a husband should provide in marriage? In Ephesians five, Paul says this: “For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior” (Ephesians 5:23, NIV). The word “head” means “authority,” but being an authority does not mean being an authoritarian. The husband is to exercise authority over his wife in the same way that Christ exercises authority over the church. Jesus never forced anybody to do anything. He doesn’t bully the church, throw His weight around, yell, scream, or demand anything. Jesus led His disciples by serving them. He was a servant leader who said, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45, NIV). Husbands need to have a foot-washing mentality when it comes to their wives. Lyrics from an old country song say it this way: “A woman wants a man she can look up to that won’t look down on her.”

## Notes

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# Fanning the Flames (Part Two)

Marriage Made in Heaven | Week 45 | Ephesians 5:23, 25–33

If a husband looks up to his wife by serving her, she will look up to him by following his leadership. But his leadership cannot be haughty; it must be humble.

## Notes

### 2. Practice Heavenly Love

How should a husband love his wife according to God's design? Paul commands this, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ..." (Ephesians 5:25, NIV). When the husbands in Ephesus first heard these words, they probably fell out of their chairs because this was absolutely revolutionary. Paul uses the word *agape*—the same word used in John 3:16. It's the love you give when someone's unlovable, and seems undeserving. This kind of love is not a feeling; it's a command. It's an act of the will that always puts the other person first. Paul asks the bigger question: Do you love your wife enough not just to die for her, but to die to yourself and live for her? You've got to die to what you want out of the marriage and start living for what you can give to the marriage. Paul says to love your wives "as [your] own bodies" (Ephesians 5:28, NIV). We love our bodies every day: When it's hungry, we feed it; when it's thirsty, we water it; when it's tired, we rest it.

A husband is to love his wife the way he loves his body—by providing for her, protecting her, and putting her needs above his own.

### 3. Promise Divine Loyalty

Paul concludes by going back to the first marriage: "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh" (Ephesians 5:31, NIV). Marriage is a covenant relationship where the husband is to be united to his wife through a covenant, an oath, a binding promise. Malachi 2:14 calls the wife "your partner, the wife of





## Fanning the Flames (Part Two)

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*Marriage Made in Heaven | Week 45 | Ephesians 5:23, 25–33*

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### Reflection Questions

1. How does Jesus' example of servant leadership challenge the way husbands think about being "head" of their home? If you are a husband, what would humble leadership look like in your daily interactions with your wife?

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2. What does it mean to you that marriage is a covenant, not just a contract? How does understanding that your marriage mirrors Christ's relationship with the church change your perspective on your commitment?

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3. For husbands: Paul emphasizes that if your wife is not being drawn closer to Jesus by the way you're leading and loving her, you're not the husband you ought to be. How are you providing spiritual leadership in your home?

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Why do you think Jesus started His teaching about marriage with God's original design? In Matthew 19, Jesus declares, "Haven't you read ... that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female'" (v. 4, NIV). Jesus is not just giving His opinion on marriage. He goes back to the very beginning to establish the foundation of God's original plan for marriage. This one statement tells us what the inventor of marriage intended for marriage to look like from creation: a male and a female joined together. Jesus builds three characteristics into marriage. First is duality: It takes two human beings to get married. You can't marry your dog or your car. Second is heterosexuality: He did not create them male and male or female and female, but male and female. Third is monogamy: He created one male and one female, not many males and many

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# Marriage Math

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*Marriage Made in Heaven | Week 46 | Matthew 19:4-6*

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## Reflection Questions

1. What does it mean practically for a married couple to “become one flesh”? How should this divine mathematical approach ( $1 + 1 = 1$ ) change the way spouses relate to each other daily?

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2. Jesus teaches that God is the one who joins couples together in marriage. How does this truth impact your view of the permanence and sacredness of the marriage covenant?

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3. Whether single or married, how can you better support God’s design for marriage in a culture that is increasingly moving away from His original plan?

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# An Old-Fashioned Love Song

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*Marriage Made in Heaven | Week 47 | Song of Solomon*

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## Reflection Questions

1. John Gottman's research shows you need five positive interactions for every negative one in marriage. How would you rate your current ratio, and what specific positive words could you speak to your spouse this week?

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2. How are you currently spelling love (T-I-M-E) in your marriage? What creative ways could you carve out more together time, even with busy schedules or limited resources?

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3. For husbands: How can you show more non-sexual affection to meet your wife's need to be "hugged, held, and heard"? For wives: How can you be more sensitive to your husband's need for sexual fulfillment?

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# Introduction

## Key Points

## Notes





see." Love doesn't keep a ledger of bad deeds like an accountant tracking debts. Most importantly, love tells the truth when it's needed and receives truth when it's hard to hear.

Practice one specific action of love daily—patience when your spouse is late, kindness in your tone, or forgiveness instead of keeping score.

## 2. Cultivate Love Through Your Attitude

After describing what love does, Paul reveals the attitude that sustains it: “Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 Corinthians 13:7, ESV). The phrase “all things” appears four times in this one verse. Paul wants you to understand that real love doesn’t give up when circumstances get difficult. Love bears all things like a roof protects a house from storms. It believes all things, meaning you choose to see the best in your spouse rather than assuming the worst. Love hopes all things because if there’s a God in Heaven for whom nothing is impossible, then no marriage is beyond hope. Finally, love endures all things, taking the long view and refusing to quit. C.S. Lewis reminds us that we already practice this kind of love with ourselves, accepting our own flaws while still loving who we are.

Choose to believe the best about your spouse today, trusting that God is working even when you can't see it.

### 3. Trust Love Because It Never Fails

Paul continues with three simple words that change everything: “Love never fails” (1 Corinthians 13:8, NIV). This isn’t wishful thinking; it’s a promise rooted in God’s character. God doesn’t just have love or do love; He is love, and God never fails. The reality is, you’ll never love your spouse the way you should until you love God the way you should. When you love God most, you’ll love your spouse best. Commitment may keep

## Notes



# Secret Sauce

Marriage Made in Heaven | Week 48 | 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

you living in the same house, but love keeps you beating with the same heart. I read a story about a hospital chaplain who spent hours in intensive care waiting rooms, seeing people's final moments with one another. Distinctions of race or class melted away, vanity disappeared, and everyone understood that loving someone was what life was really all about. What if you could learn to love like that every day, not just in crisis moments? It begins by trusting God's unfailing love for you.

Ask God to fill you with His love first, then watch how it transforms the way you love your spouse.

## Key Takeaway

*The love described in 1 Corinthians 13 isn't just an ideal; it's the supernatural love God offers to every married couple who asks for it. When you love with patience, kindness, hope, and endurance, you create a marriage that lasts not only until problems come, but until death parts you.*

## Notes

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# Secret Sauce

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*Marriage Made in Heaven | Week 48 | 1 Corinthians 13:4-8*

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## Reflection Questions

1. Which characteristic of love from 1 Corinthians 13:4-6 (patience, kindness, not envying, not boasting, etc.) is currently your biggest challenge in your marriage? What specific step could you take this week to improve in that area?

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2. Paul says love “keeps no record of wrongs.” Are you keeping a mental note of your spouse’s mistakes? How might forgiving and forgetting those past hurts transform your relationship?

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3. How does your love for God directly impact your ability to love your spouse? In what practical ways could deepening your relationship with God strengthen your marriage?

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