

# Restoration<sup>1</sup>



## SABBATH—JANUARY 14

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY:** Genesis 1:26-28; Genesis 2:23-25; Genesis 3:1-24; Matthew 19:3-9; Luke 17:21; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 1:4; Galatians 6:2; Ephesians 3:16-19.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “All of you should honor marriage. You should keep the marriage bed pure. God will judge the person who commits sexual sins” (Hebrews 13:4, NIV).

**GOD ESTABLISHED MARRIAGE AS A PERMANENT UNION BETWEEN A MAN AND A WOMAN.** Marriage was to be a blessing. Marriage was another part of God's great creation. Marriage was perhaps the greatest pre-Fall<sup>2</sup> example of God's unlimited love for people. How sad, then, that the closeness of marriage between Adam and Eve suffered from the curse brought on by their sin. Humans have been living with this curse ever since. But with Christ came a new hope for married couples. In Christ, husband and wife may experience the restoration of God's plan for marriage.

**A LOOK AT THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** In Eden, God established marriage as holy. Sadly, sin polluted marriage. But the gospel can restore<sup>3</sup> marriage to the purity and beauty it had in Eden.

Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, January 21.

<sup>1</sup>restoration—a return to the way things were before sin appeared.

<sup>2</sup>pre-Fall—before Adam and Eve sinned.

<sup>3</sup>restore—make something as it was in the beginning before sin appeared.

**SUNDAY—JANUARY 15****MARRIAGE IN EDEN (Genesis 1:26-28; Genesis 2:23-25).**

**Jesus discussed marriage in answer to a question about divorce. What example did He use? What points did He make? Matthew 19:3-5; Genesis 1:26-28; Genesis 2:24, 25.**

Using Genesis 1 and 2, Christ supported God’s creation plan for marriage. Genesis 1:26-28 shows two kinds of people, male and female (Genesis 5:2). God told both of them to have children and to take care of the earth. So both male and female stand as equals before God. Genesis 2 shows how God created the male and female and how He started marriage. The need of the first human (Adam) for friendship and sexual satisfaction led God to give him a “helper” (Eve) (Genesis 2:18, NIV). The word “helper” often describes God in relationship (connection) to people (read Deuteronomy 33:7, 26, 29). God miraculously removed a rib from Adam and fashioned a beautiful woman for him. Then God joined them in marriage (Genesis 2:21, 22). With great joy, the man recognized his companion as “woman” (Hebrew *ishshah*) connected to him but separate from himself as “man” (Hebrew *ish*).

**What are some of the require-**

**ments of marriage? Genesis 2:24.**

Marriage is a permanent union between a male and a female. Marriage includes (1) leaving father and mother, (2) being joined to each other, and (3) becoming one flesh. “Leave” suggests the creation of a separate family with special rights and limits. “Joined” means the couple’s agreement to be loyal to a formal marriage vow covenant (agreement; promise). “Becoming one flesh” describes both the sexual union and the lifelong growth in closeness, unity, and satisfaction that a married couple is to experience in all parts of their lives.

**How does the Eden marriage show principles<sup>4</sup> that explain our relationship (connection) to God?**

**MONDAY—JANUARY 16****CRISIS (TROUBLE) AND CONSOLATION (COMFORT) (Genesis 3).**

**How does the story of the fall into sin show the changed situation of marriage and how the marriage partners felt toward God and each other? Genesis 3.**

Adam and Eve wore clothes made from fig leaves and hid from God in the bushes! They had lost the physi-

<sup>4</sup>principles—basic rules.

cal, emotional, and spiritual closeness they had with their Creator and with each other. Adam and Eve did not accept responsibility for their sin. Adam blamed Eve. Eve blamed the snake. But really they blamed God, who had created Eve and the snake.

**How does Genesis 3:16 show the change in marriage that came from sin?**

*Results of the Fall on marriage:* The original closeness and equality between Adam and Eve were gone. Now the wife would be ruled by her husband. Down through history, wives have often been treated as the property of their husbands. Abuse has made many women's situations very hard. Ellen White wrote: "Eve committed (did) the first sin. For this reason, God told her that Adam should rule over her. She was to be under her husband's rule. This was a part of the curse."—Adapted from *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 484. Eve's lower position was not because she was female. Her lower position was because she was first to sin. Also, her lower position was part of the curse.

**How are you quick to blame others for your actions? What steps can you take to be more responsible for what you do?**

## TUESDAY—JANUARY 17

### UPHOLDING MARRIAGE (Galatians 6:2).

**What principles do the following verses give that are important for a good marriage?**

Exodus 20:14, 17 \_\_\_\_\_

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Proverbs 5:15-20 \_\_\_\_\_

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Galatians 6:2 \_\_\_\_\_

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Philippians 2:1-4 \_\_\_\_\_

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In the Bible, close relationships<sup>5</sup> are honored by covenants (agreements; promises). The most important covenant is the covenant between

<sup>5</sup>relationships—the connections we have with people.

God and His people (Genesis 9:9-17; Isaiah 55:3; Hebrews 13:20). Human covenants are “contracts” that include promises, rights, and responsibilities. Promises, rights, and responsibilities are also important in a marriage. When human covenants are made in God’s presence, they bring faithfulness into human relationships.

Ezekiel uses the marriage covenant to describe God in His relationship to His bride, Israel (Ezekiel 16:8). The marriage covenant is broken when the marriage union has been abused. For example, an adulterous wife leaves “the partner of her youth” and ignores “the covenant she made before God” (Proverbs 2:17, NIV). Or a husband betrays the wife of his youth, the wife of his “marriage covenant” (Malachi 2:14, NIV). Holy promises made at the beginning of marriage are to be honored throughout life.

**Why is death to self<sup>6</sup> so important in keeping any marriage strong? How might you need more of this death in any of your relationships?**

### WEDNESDAY—JANUARY 18

#### RESTORATION IN CHRIST (2 Corinthians 5:17).

“Marriage has been twisted by sin. But it is the purpose of the gospel to

restore<sup>7</sup> marriage to its purity and beauty.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 64.



The gospel helps to restore relationships.

**How does the Bible picture the work of Christ in restoring<sup>8</sup> what was lost through sin? Luke 17:21; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 1:4; Ephesians 3:16-19. How can these verses help us have better marriages?**

Christians wait for freedom from the presence of sin. But as subjects of Christ’s kingdom of grace, they are freed from sin’s penalty and power. Believers desire to follow God’s will in all areas of life. For marriage, the

<sup>6</sup>death to self—the willingness to give up an old sinful life to lead a new life in Christ.

<sup>7</sup>restore—to bring something back to the way it was before sin appeared.

<sup>8</sup>restoring—bringing something back to the way it was before sin appeared.

Creator becomes the Re-creator. By His Holy Spirit, Christ makes it possible for couples to show love and grace in their marriage. Eden lost can be Eden restored. By studying Christ's plan, by prayer, and by His power, married couples may grow more toward marriage as it was in Eden.

**What principle stops the power of sin? Matthew 20:20-28; John 13:4, 5, 12-17; Philippians 2:5-8.**



**We should be willing to serve others the same way Christ was willing to serve His disciples.**

**What advice does Paul give to wives and to husbands? Ephesians 5:21-33.**

“The gospel focuses on the love and surrender of husband and wife to one another (1 Corinthians 7:3, 4; Ephesians 5:21). The example for the husband's leadership is how Christ shows His love, sacrifice, and service to the church (Ephesians 5:24, 25). Both Peter and Paul speak about the need for respect in marriage (1 Peter 3:7; Ephesians 5:22, 23).”—Adapted

from *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, Revised 2000, 16th Edition, pp. 192, 193.

**If married, what changes can you make to more fully follow the principles of the gospel in controlling your marriage? If unmarried, how can these principles help you in other relationships?**

### THURSDAY—JANUARY 19

#### THE CREATION PLAN IN A SINFUL WORLD (Matthew 19:3-9).

**How did Jesus show God's plan for marriage and the real side of marriage in a sinful world? Matthew 19:3-9.**

Jesus showed that God's plan for marriage is a permanent union between a man and a woman. Christ's followers want to follow this plan. They know He can help them by His grace and His Holy Spirit. Christians have a special responsibility to plan for marriage prayerfully, to choose their partners wisely, and to prepare carefully for married life. Then, in marriage, they must carefully protect their faithfulness to each other. They must want God's grace to help them adjust to each other and grow together.

*Hardness of human hearts:* Marriage is God's creation. But people are sinful. Marriages between Christian men and women do break apart sometimes. Jesus admitted that the hardness of human hearts led to divorce (Matthew

19:8; Deuteronomy 24:1-4). But Jesus Himself was very clear about what He thought of divorce.

When a marriage is in trouble, counselors should do everything possible to help bring quarreling couples back together. Divorce should always be taken seriously. The Bible gives guidance for restoring damaged relationships (Hosea 3:1-3; 1 Corinthians 7:10, 11; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7; Galatians 6:1). When divorce has happened, former partners should be encouraged to seek God's grace to help them examine their experience and to learn God's will for their lives. God comforts those who have been hurt. He also accepts the heartfelt repentance<sup>9</sup> of persons who do the most terrible sins.

**How can the church support God's plan for marriage and give understanding, mercy,<sup>10</sup> and help to believers in rebuilding their lives after divorce?**

### FRIDAY—JANUARY 20

**ADDITIONAL STUDY:** Read Ellen G. White, "The Eden Home a Pattern [Example]," *The Adventist Home*, pp. 25–28; "The Builders of the Home," *The Ministry [Work] of Healing*, pp. 356–362.

*Entering marriage wisely:* "The family tie is the closest, the sweetest, and most sacred (holy) of any tie on earth. It

was planned to be a blessing to people. It is a blessing when people enter into the marriage covenant (agreement) wisely and in the fear of God. It is a blessing, too, when they think seriously about marriage responsibilities."—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home*, p. 18.

*Rulership:* "The husband or wife is not to make a plea for rulership. God has laid down the principle that is to guide in this matter. The husband is to hold his wife dear as Christ holds the church dear. And the wife is to respect and love her husband. Both are to develop kindness. Both are to promise to never sadden or injure the other."



**"You obey the law of Christ when you offer each other a hand" (Galatians 6:2, CEV).**

<sup>9</sup>repentance—being sorry for your sins, wanting to stop sinning, and turning away from your sin.

<sup>10</sup>mercy—kindness we do not deserve.

—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 47.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. In class, discuss the principles shown in the second Ellen White quote on pages 24 and 25. What would these principles do for any marriage?
2. With the above question in mind, answer this question: What often causes divorce?

3. How are the principles of a good marriage almost the same as the principles that could help someone have other good relationships?
4. As a class, write in one paragraph what the marriage vows should be.

**SUMMARY:** Sin has damaged marriage. But God, through Christ, is working in us to restore marriage as it was in Eden.