

ANDERSON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

MARRIAGE: GOD'S DESIGN... DESTROYED... RESTORED...

A PROFESSIONAL PROJECT SUBMITTED TO
THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY STUDIES PROGRAM
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY
GORDON ROLF GOTTFRIED STEINKE

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ABSTRACT

Christians are struggling to experience the fulfillment they expect of marriage. For 2000 years the church has been sending confusing messages of what it means to be male, female, and joined in marriage. Chapters I and II explore the state of confusion in the church.

The starting point for another discussion of marriage is the Bible. When Jesus was asked about divorce, he pointed back to Genesis 1 and 2 and spoke about marriage. A study of marriage begins with God's design—which was destroyed by sin. Jesus came to restore God's original plan. "Design, Destroyed, and Restored" are the phases of biblical revelation.

The biblical study of these three phases is the focus of Chapters III, IV, and V. Utilizing this three-part framework, the biblical data are shaped into eight foundational marriage principles and presented in Chapter VI:

- ◆ God's design for marriage is restored through Jesus (because it was destroyed by sin).
- ◆ Marriage is friendship expressed through love and respect (without blaming).
- ◆ Marriage is two equals who submit to each other (not vying for power).
- ◆ Marriage is working together through the use of spiritual gifts (lessening the pain of work).
- ◆ Marriage is a one-flesh intimacy as husbands and wives give themselves and their bodies to each other (instead of covering up in shame).
- ◆ Marriage is the choice to leave home and cling to your spouse—for life (not abandoning that relationship).

- ◆ Marriage is a joint journey with God while becoming spiritual friends (without hiding from God).
- ◆ Marriage is celebrating differences while seeing each other as equals (without controlling the other person).

These are the truths of Genesis 1 and 2 taught again in the New Testament (so that husbands and wives can avoid the devastation of Genesis 3).

Chapter VII presents these eight principles in a format a small group can use to study and learn together. And, it works! Chapter VIII reveals the survey data that prove the effectiveness of the curriculum and show the remarkable correlation between applying these eight principles and the experience of marital satisfaction.

There is always a new challenge ahead. Chapter IX explores the next steps of learning, living, and loving.