Is Marriage Necessary?

Shalom! Welcome—let’s study the Bible together.

One of the freedoms God gave humanity is the ability to marry. God designed marriage as a sacred covenant between one man and one woman, intended for companionship, mutual support, and the procreation and nurturing of children. Anyone who marries according to God’s design will be blessed.

> *Matthew 19:4-5 (ESV)*
>
> *says:*
> “He answered, ‘Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh”?’ “

This passage emphasizes that marriage reflects God’s original design for humanity. It is not only about companionship but also about unity—the “one flesh” relationship mirrors Christ’s relationship with the Church (Ephesians 5:31-32). Marriage is therefore a divine institution, ordained before the Fall.

Marriage Is Not Required for Everyone

However, marriage is not a requirement for all believers. Some may be called to remain single for spiritual reasons. Paul explains this in:

> *1 Corinthians 7:32-34 (ESV):*
> “I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, and his interests are divided. The unmarried woman and the virgin are anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband.”

Here, Paul highlights that singleness can allow for undivided devotion to God’s work. Theologically, singleness is seen as a gift of grace

> *(1 Corinthians 7:7, ESV), allowing a believer to serve the Lord without distraction. Married life, while blessed and honorable, necessarily divides one’s attention between God and family responsibilities.*

Practical Challenges of Marriage

Marriage is a beautiful institution, but it comes with responsibilities. Once married:

Your body belongs to your spouse (1 Corinthians 7:3-5, ESV).

You share financial, emotional, and parental duties.

Your freedom for ministry travel, fasting, or long prayer retreats is

limited.

Being single, however, offers flexibility and freedom for ministry. A single believer can travel, fast, and dedicate extended time to prayer or preaching without needing to coordinate with a spouse or household responsibilities. This can have eternal significance in God’s kingdom.

Biblical Examples of Singleness for Ministry

Some of the greatest servants of God remained single, dedicating themselves entirely to His work:

Jesus Christ: fully devoted to the Father’s mission, without marriage.

Paul the Apostle: not one of the original twelve apostles, yet accomplished ministry greater than many of them (1 Corinthians 15:10, ESV).

John the Baptist and Elijah the Prophet: lived lives of celibate

devotion, serving God fully.

Singleness, therefore, is not a lesser path; it is a valid calling, depending on God’s purpose for the individual.

Marriage as a Solution for Self-Control

Scripture also teaches that marriage is the appropriate path for those who cannot remain celibate:

> *1 Corinthians 7:8-9 (ESV):*
> “To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single, as I am. But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.”

Marriage, in this sense, serves as God’s provision to manage human desires righteously. It is not sin to marry; it is sin to indulge desires outside God’s design (Hebrews 13:4, ESV).

Warnings About Cohabitation Without Marriage

Living together without marriage is considered sinful, even if a couple has lived together for years or has children. The Bible calls for repentance and formal, covenantal marriage:

> *Hebrews 13:4 (ESV):*
> “Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.”

Marriage is not about celebration or ceremony; it is about obedience, covenant, and public commitment before God and witnesses. Failing to formalize the union is a matter of accountability before God.

Salvation as the First Priority

Finally, for those seeking a spouse, salvation must come first. Earthly marriage cannot replace our eternal relationship with Christ. Without Christ, we are lost forever. And remember, in heaven there is no marriage (Matthew 22:30, ESV); eternal life is centered on communion with God, not earthly institutions.

Salvation is the ultimate priority, and everything else, including marriage, follows.

Conclusion

Marriage is a blessing ordained by God, reflecting His covenantal relationship with His people. Singleness is also a valid calling, allowing for undivided devotion to the Lord. Both paths have spiritual significance. The key is obedience, faithfulness, and prioritizing one’s relationship with God above all else.

Maranatha!

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