

Marriage on the Rock 12

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[0 : 0 0] Welcome to Marriage on the Rock. Here's Marv Wiseman.

How Marriage Came to Be There can be little doubt that this wonderful institution we call marriage had its genesis in Genesis, Chapter 2. And here is how the text reads that describes what has always been considered the first marriage.

The presiding officiant, if you will, was none other than the God who had created both Adam and Eve. And beginning with verse 18 of Chapter 2 in Genesis, we read, And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him and help, meet for him.

Verse 21 states, And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept. And he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof.

And the rib which the Lord God had taken from man made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.

[1 : 0 9] She shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore, shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh.

We do not have any historical documentation that predates this Genesis account of what can only be considered the first marriage. That is, the giving of a man and a woman to each other, for the purpose of uniting them as one.

This uniting, or bonding, will be physical, as in their being joined in the act of conjugal love. And it will be emotional, in that there will be a bonding together of their hearts and minds.

And it will be spiritual, in that both Adam and Eve will possess a capacity to relate to their Creator, with their human spirit connecting with God their Creator, who is also a spirit being.

This arrangement, originated by God Himself, can only occur between a male and a female. Only the male has a masculine psyche, and only the female has a feminine psyche.

[2 : 2 0] And it is the blending of these, each contributing something the other cannot, that comprises this unique combination. Physically, it results in each contributing ingredients that, when coupled with the ingredients of the other, produces a whole new human being, an offspring.

Hence, the two, the male and the female, become one flesh in the person of their baby. So, they become one as they are physically joined together in the conjugal act, and they become one in the child produced as a result of that act.

It's only in the contribution of these two, each bringing their maleness and femaleness to this event, can this result of a new human being actually occur.

This does not only appear to be the divine intent and provision for the propagation of humanity, but it is equally clear that this combination of male and female is the only way it is to be achieved.

One may search history in vain to find any other arrangement for the propagation of the human race, and it has worked about six or seven billion times that we know of, and counting, and counting.

[3 : 43] The Wedding and the Marriage While the account recorded in Genesis is not called a wedding or a marriage per se, yet it is hard to think of it as anything else.

It was, in fact, God giving the man and the woman to each other, so as to constitute a oneness between them. And what else is a marriage if not that?

Now let's address the distinction between the ceremony called a wedding and the marriage that follows it. While a wedding and a marriage are not the same, it's the wedding ceremony that sets the stage for the marriage to follow.

But be advised, a wedding does not a marriage make. The wedding occurs as a public declaration, a ceremony, and is often over with in a matter of minutes.

The marriage is private. Weddings are important and provide for the public declaration of each when they express their vows of commitment to the other. But when the wedding is over and the consummation of the union takes place on the honeymoon night, then begins the marriage in reality.

[4 : 59] So, weddings are over and done with in a matter of hours, if you factor in a reception and all that accompanies it. But the marriage? Marriage? That's the till death do you part thing.

And as stated on earlier segments of Marriage on the Rock, marriage, if conducted as God intended, is as close as a man and woman can get to heaven while still living on planet Earth.

That is not an exaggeration. It's a fact. It is this wedding, this public declaration of each to the other, that secures the right of this couple to begin their marriage.

It will then be on the wedding night we call the beginning of the honeymoon that the conjugal act will actually consummate the union. The wedding ceremony was that which gave them the legal and moral right to engage in the sexual relations under the blessing of God and the approval of society.

Whereas once these tandem acts of wedding and marriage were both regarded as essentials to the union, many no longer see it that way.

[6 : 18] Some moderns now say, skip the wedding, the vows, and the public being involved. Let's just move in and live together.

We don't need a wedding to give us the right to each other's body in the conjugal act of marriage. Weddings are expensive. And divorces, if we decide we are not compatible, are even more so.

If it doesn't work out, then we'll just go our separate ways. No muss, no fuss. After all, we know we love each other.

Let's just skip all the foldy roll and start living it up by living together. And it's becoming more and more frequent. This is why we are compelled to devote several segments to living together without marriage.

Coming up. Who Makes the Rules? Part 1 In trying to be as honest and forthright as we can, we admit there appears to be an upside and a downside to nearly every important social decision we can make.

[7 : 35] The decision of a man and woman to live together without the benefit of legal marriage is one of them. There are pros and cons. There is an upside and a downside to living together without marriage.

But we hasten to add that the downside considerably outweighs the upside, so much so that we are compelled to advise against it. You are being asked now to honestly consider the pros and cons and see whether you agree or disagree.

After all, you and your intended are free moral agents and you will ultimately make the decision you want to make whether you agree with what will be said in the forthcoming arguments of Marriage on the Rock or not.

So, let's begin with upside number one. We will call it societal acceptability. In the previous generations, living together without marriage was frowned upon in most communities and simply regarded as an indecent, immoral thing to do.

In some parts of the country, a couple doing so may even have been ostracized or unwelcomed at many community functions, or in some cases even unwelcome at gatherings like family reunions.

[8 : 57] And that may still be true, but in far less numbers and far fewer places. Society seems to legitimize and stop disapproving of a given behavior once enough people are doing it.

What may once have been the proverbial taboo mysteriously becomes more and more acceptable. The indecency and immorality once assigned to couples living together without marriage has all but disappeared, and no government office has passed any laws connected with it.

No doubt the societal acceptability of this issue is connected with the moral breakdown of the traditional standards of society as a whole. The laxity or the loosening of behavioral restrictions in other areas, including how society now regards abortion on demand, homosexuality, lesbianism, same-sex marriage, all provide impetus to the relaxing or dispensing of previous behavioral standards, including that of living together without marriage.

In short, as of now, and by most, it's just no big deal any longer. So now if a couple prefers to go this way, they are more likely to gain nods of approval rather than not, barring, of course, the possibility of some looked upon as old-fashioned or fuddy duds who are accused of trying to live in the past.

So if you do live together without marriage, it won't be the societal hassle it once was. To some, this in and of itself makes it okay. But is it?

[10 : 41] Is the current society the arbiter of our behavioral standards? If so, you're home free. No pun intended. But if not, there is a problem. Upcoming. Who Makes the Rules? Part 2 If the community you live in is accepting of a man and woman living together without marriage, and that's what you want to do, it's quite clear that it's okay with them.

And if you are persuaded that a given community is, in itself, the standard setter for right and wrong, for acceptable and unacceptable behavior between a man and a woman, then it's case closed.

Go ahead and do it. And you know you have the blessing of your peers. Or perhaps we should say you at least do not have the disdain of your peers.

But if you believe that neither your community nor any other community is the ultimate rulemaker, then you need to learn who is.

The Bible and human history tell us this ultimate rulemaker is the God of heaven, the creator and sustainer of all life. And since he is that, he and he alone has the right to make the rules.

[12 : 05] Now, if that just doesn't matter to you that your behavior offends him, then go ahead and do as you please, taking your chances of avoiding any fallout from his displeasure.

If, on the other hand, you do not want to offend or displease this ultimate rulemaker, but in fact you would want his blessing in your togetherness, then you need to pursue the course he has set forth that would please him rather than the murky approval granted by a society of flawed people whose values change from generation to generation.

It's your choice. According to the Bible, it's a wonderful thing for a person to live a life free of the shackles of guilt. And the same goes for a marriage.

Shacking up together will absolutely place the couple under the cloud of guilt and will impinge upon the blessedness the union was intended to enjoy. And it doesn't make any difference whether they believe this or not.

In fact, it doesn't even matter if both are committed atheists. They cannot escape the divine deposit that God has made in every human heart.

[13 : 23] Yes, even while they may be screaming that they don't believe in God. No matter. Deny it all they want. They are still made in his likeness and image.

And the Creator tells us in Romans 1 that that which may be known of God is manifest in them. For God has shown it unto them.

Men can deny God all they want, but in their heart of hearts they know better. And God says so. So in reality, the only question remaining, therefore, is whether you think it worthwhile to pursue the wedding and the approval of this ultimate rulemaker who does not change, or whether you are content to allow your ever-drifting, changing culture to make the rules for you.

And nobody in reality can make that choice but you and your intendant. Recapping the recent.

Thus far, we have considered, ever so briefly, how marriage came to be, or why anybody ever got married. Who instituted this thing called marriage?

[14 : 46] And what commonality is it that persists about marriage, no matter what the culture? We dealt with the distinctions between the wedding and the marriage, and how it is that the wedding actually provides societal permission for the marriage to be consummated on the honeymoon night.

Attention was also given, again only briefly, to the ever-increasing willingness for many couples today to simply dispense with the public declaration of the wedding vows and move in together just as if they were actually married.

The temptation to skip the wedding, plus the convenience of backing out of the relationship if it doesn't work, makes the living together without marriage even more appealing.

And we talked about the three kinds of couples that may do this. Couple number one consisted of neither the male or female being Christians, that is, believers in the biblical sense of the word.

And then couple two was made up of one partner being a believer while the other is not. This constituted what the Bible calls the unequal yoke, that is, a marriage between a Christian and a non-Christian.

[16 : 08] Personal testimony was related about how yours truly very nearly entered into that unequal yoke, only to be spared of such by the grace of God and a godly pastor who was committed to the authority of Scripture, which actually led to my personal salvation.

This not only prevented an unequal yoke, but resulted in an incredible union with Barbara that was only months shy of 50 amazing years of wedded bliss.

And then couple number three relates to both the male and the female being genuine Christians and foregoing the marriage vows, yet moving in and living together as if legally married.

Now, some may think that if the couple were truly Christians, they could not do that. This is not true. People who are truly Christians still have a personal volition and still have an old Adamic nature that enables them to walk in the flesh as opposed to walking in the Spirit.

And this, of course, is precisely what they are doing. Read Galatians 5. You see, Christians still have the ability to do really dumb and sinful things even though they have no excuse for doing so.

[17 : 29] And we do not become incapable of going against what God has prescribed even though we are not justified in doing so. So this couple, both professing a relationship to Christ and enjoying his salvation, nevertheless live together without marriage, will be the subject upcoming.

Now, if this happens to be you, question is, do you have the intellectual honesty to pursue this? I hope you do. And if you do, it's upcoming.

Does the Bible demand that lovers marry? Is there a chapter and verse that says a Christian man and woman must get married in a public ceremony rather than merely live together?

No, not in those words. But the Bible does say that Christians are to flee fornication in 1 Corinthians 6. Fornication, generally speaking, refers to the sexual involvement of an unmarried man or woman.

Adultery is the same except the involved party is married and sexually involved with someone else. To flee fornication simply means to run from it.

[18 : 44] This is what Joseph did in Genesis 39, when the wife of the Egyptian pharaoh attempted to seduce him. He fled. The simplest solution. The reason we need to run from fornication is to prevent ourselves from yielding to it.

The lure of sexual involvement and excitement can be overwhelmingly compelling. So much so that two good feet must remove one's body from the temptation.

Today, of course, lacking as many are in the sexual constraints the ancient Egyptians had, we would say Joseph would merely have been participating in consensual sex.

And what's wrong with that? Well, could it be that the ancient know-nothing Egyptians had moral scruples that transcend ours?

So besides the Bible saying flee fornication in 1 Corinthians 6, it also says in chapter 7 that to avoid fornication, every man is to have his own wife and every woman her own husband.

[19 : 51] Later, in the same chapter, it says that the unmarried and the widows should remain as such, but if they cannot contain, let them marry.

What does that mean, if they cannot contain? It means if they cannot contain their sexual urge, that is, they cannot resist the normal temptations and opportunities to fulfill their sexual passion, then let them marry, or encourage them to marry.

Now notice, the text does not say, if you really love God and have faith, you won't have any sexual passions. Nonsense. He is admitting that sexual desires are God-given and normal, and the God-given solution to them is to get married.

Now that may not sound very spiritual to those of a legalistic bent, but it is very scriptural and normal. So, don't beat yourself up if you have sexual urges.

Only beware that you do not satisfy them by fornicating. Lastly, Paul says, it is better to marry than to burn. No doubt some would interpret this to mean, if you want to prevent your burning in hell, get married.

[21 : 11] But such is far removed from what he is saying. The context reveals that the sexual urge creates an emotional blaze, a flame in the person who is experiencing it or enduring it, and that is no way to live.

Find a mate and get married, so as to extinguish that burning in a God-given way, the conjugal relations you will have with your married partner. Unmarried Christians Living Together, Part 1 Is it possible for a man and woman, who are truly saved, genuine, born-again Christians, to actually begin living together as husband and wife, even though they are not legally married?

Is that possible? Of course it's possible. And if that shocks you, let me ask another question. Is it possible for an unmarried Christian man and woman to commit fornication?

That is, engage in sexual relations while yet single? Of course it is. It happens all the time. Now, no one is saying it's right. We're only saying it happens, and all too frequently.

In fact, it happens about as frequently as sexual relations occur between those who are married, if the two in question are living together. The powerful raging hormones in males and females that crave the sexual experience don't occur only in married people, and neither do they cease hormonal activity at the point of one's salvation, so they won't be tempted until they are married.

[22 : 52] Let's face the issue honestly. The urge for sexual expression is God-given. It is as natural as the drive for food and water, and just as legitimate, because God Himself originated it.

But, like every other provision of God, including food and drink, it is subject to abuse. There is not a good thing God has given to mankind that man is not able to abuse, to make it in its excesses a bad and destructive thing, and sex is no different.

It is merely one more of the good things God has provided for humanity that humanity has the ability to abuse and pervert. To make our sexuality what God intended it to be, that is, a conjugal expression of deep and abiding love that each married partner has for their mate, many have removed it from its original parameters, and this has cheapened and demeaned its original intention.

Originally, it was the divinely exquisite provision for the man and woman who had declared their commitment to each other in a public setting, called a wedding.

But, when that commitment is not present, nor even required, as in a recognized marriage, their very act of fornication is not a beautiful thing, but just the opposite.

[24 : 27] Such a couple, even if Christians, have stepped outside those divine boundaries, and try as they may to justify and legitimize and rationalize their behavior, there is no escaping the guilt.

Guilt is certain to accompany a relationship built upon fornication, and they have in all likelihood regarded their living together without marriage as practical, logical, and understandable.

Is there no way out? Of course there is, and we don't mean simply getting married, but that would be a good start, a step in the right direction. There's more, lots more, upcoming.

Fasten your seatbelt. Unmarried Christians Living Together, Part 2 Follow the money.

That's a phrase often used when looking for a motive behind a person or a company's decisions. There is no end to financial considerations being a chief rationale in so many cases, and sometimes very prudently and legitimately.

[25 : 38] You do have to take into consideration the money that is involved. But, is this legitimate in the case of Christians living together without marriage?

And mind you, this is not about those who call themselves Christians because they were reared in a Christian home or because they attend church. This is about people who truly do know Christ as their Savior, and they have experienced the new birth brought about by regeneration via His forgiveness and His placing them in union with Himself.

We already addressed the issue as to whether such people as those truly born again could be capable of living together without marriage, and we most emphatically concluded that they can and several do.

Now, no one is saying that such is biblically permissible because it isn't, but we are saying it is humanly possible, and it goes on all the time.

This is because two people who love each other and happen to be Christians does not mean they are somehow exempt from doing non-Christian things, like living together without marriage or a host of other behaviors unbecoming to Christianity.

[27 : 01] So fornication, in their case, is merely added to whatever other sin they may be engaged in. In fact, it is the reality that Christians are doing this that goes a long way toward encouraging other Christians who are considering it to do it as well.

And, as to the money to be saved, well, by consolidating their expenses, they can save much more and more quickly be able to make that down payment on a house they want or pay off their debts more quickly or on and on.

There's almost no end to the pluses they can enumerate that are to be gained if they share their living expenses by living together.

The rationale goes, we can always get married later and then we would be more financially secure for taking the plunge. This is simply a case of allowing our rationalizing away the situation rather than regarding the clear teaching of Scripture regarding fornication.

It happens all the time and it always seems so very logical. I mean, just do the math. Well, we all, regardless of our marital status or living arrangements need to be forewarned that we fallen humans are quite capable of justifying and rationalizing virtually anything we want to do.

[28 : 34] We might even say we have prayed about it and God didn't say no. Yeah, well, you owe it to yourself to consider what's upcoming.

Unmarried Christians Living Together Part 3 All through centuries past there have been Christians who were trying to decide on a certain course of action and didn't think they had any clear direction about what they should do.

Very often they sought to solve their dilemma by saying or praying something like this. Now, Lord, if this is something you do not want us to do, then we want you to block the way so we won't be able to do it.

After all, you have the power to prevent our doing this and if you do not close this door then we are going to walk through it. There. We prayed about whether we should move in and live together without getting married and at 7 p.m. tonight we're supposed to sign the lease to the apartment we have found and God, if you don't want us to do this, you can block the way but he hasn't so God, you had your chance and we're going to take your silence as approval.

We knew you would understand. What's wrong with this picture? Well, God has already quite clearly stated his position in his word and that is if we are listening and if we are willing to submit to his will because in writing to the Corinthians who were quite accustomed to committing fornication, the Apostle Paul not only tells them that now that they are Christians, they have no business engaging in fornication or for that matter, they are not even to company with fornicators.

[30 : 24] Fornication, broadly speaking, is engaging in sexual activity with someone who is not your partner in marriage. Why is this? It's because such is ultimately destructive behavior and is not to be engaged in by those who belong to Christ.

Its plain language is found in 1 Corinthians 5 and 6. And you'll also find fornication and the prohibition of it in Matthew 15, Mark 7, 2 Corinthians 12, Galatians 5, Ephesians 5, Colossians 3, 1 Thessalonians 4, Hebrews 12, Jude 7, and Revelation 9, all portraying fornication in a negative, sinful, and destructive light to be avoided.

And, for those naive souls who insist, they will not engage in sex, even though they move in to live together and share the same living space, they will keep their distance and not succumb to the temptation to take liberties they shouldn't.

Well, the intentions may be sincere, but hormones do tend to rage out of control, and before you know it, your best intentions cannot be sustained.

And it always comes down to this. The issue is authority. Do we submit to gods who truly knows what he's doing, or do we submit to our own wishes and authority because that will allow us to do what we want?

[32 : 03] And don't forget, we, even though believers, can rationalize and justify anything we really want to do and convince ourselves that God will understand.

But God has already given us his understanding. The question is, will we submit to it? Unmarried Christians Living Together Part 4 Different rationales are used by those who want to move in and live together before actually getting married.

It happens very frequently among those who are not Christians, but it also happens all too frequently among those who do profess to know the Lord. Perhaps the most common reason given among both groups is one we have already touched on, but deserves mention again because it is so often used for their justification to do so.

And here it is. Say they, we don't know for sure whether we are truly suited for each other, and this is the only way to find out. We have this trial run of living together to see if we are really compatible, and if so, well, we can always make it official later by getting married.

And if we discover we are not permanent marriage material, then we can go our separate ways with no muss, no fuss, no lawyers, and no expensive or complicated divorce.

[33 : 32] What's wrong with that? Well, if you are a believer, there's plenty wrong with that, as we've already mentioned in a previous session of Marriage on the Rock, and it involved the many references given that forbid fornication.

God has, with crystal clarity, already revealed His disapproval of Christians living together apart from marriage. And if you, as believers, choose to ignore God's will in this matter, you may do so.

But be warned, you may not do so without the ensuing consequences that always follow. Be reminded, God is not mocked, and we are reminded in Galatians 6, that whatever a man or a woman sows, this they will reap.

Simply put, our actions come complete with the consequences that flow therefrom. But can't, won't God forgive us if we violate His word and move in together?

Can't we still be forgiven? Of course. But you need also be advised that while God forgives our sin, and that completely, God does not remove the consequences that result from our sin.

[34 : 59] And these can be very painful. Because deeds have consequences, and these don't go away even though we are fully and freely forgiven by God.

How much better is it and honoring to the one who gave His all for us if we simply respect God and His will and do it His way?

After all, obeying God is the clearest way of displaying our love and gratitude to Him for the salvation He has so richly provided for us. It would seem the very least we can do is honor Him and be reminded God honors those who honor Him.

If you really want to look out for your own best interests, just put God and His will first, and you'll never regret it. Unmarried Christians Living Together Part 5 Actually, getting married in a public ceremony involves a commitment, a commitment that is absent for those who live together without getting married.

And for most, it's this commitment aspect that keeps them from getting married. That commitment isn't required for live-ins, and this is what makes it so appealing to them.

[36 : 28] You can be sure they will consider this lack of commitment to be a positive, not a negative. But, there are ways in which it is definitely a negative.

And this is because actually making the commitment and getting married makes it more difficult to call it quits and then go their separate ways. And of course, there were many who would respond to that by saying, exactly, that's why I want to do it.

So, many think that that is a good thing, but it really isn't because being legally married requires the couple to try harder to make it work. We all know of many, many marriages that have ended up being pure joy for both partners over a 50-plus years of marriage that may indeed have had a rocky and uncertain first few years.

But only because they were married did they put forth the effort, the extra work, to make it work. Had there's been an easy, no-commitment, live-in arrangement, they would have scrapped the relationship early on.

Marriage makes you try harder, and the payoff for the effort is incalculable. When both partners tie their personal integrity to those vows they took about richer or poor and sickness and in health until death us do part, requires a discipline and a determination to make the relationship work.

[37 : 59] But neither the discipline nor the determination are necessary with a live-in relationship. So, for those who want it all easy with the option of bailing out if it gets difficult, the live-in is the way to go.

It requires no discipline, no staying power, no character, no integrity, because there's no commitment. integrity, character, and staying power are unnecessary where there's no vows taken and no promise or commitment to keep them.

Living together without marriage is only for those who want it so if the going gets tough so that there's an exit nearby.

And this, if really thought through, is not at all commendable. It's purely manipulative, whereby, each partner in the live-in is manipulating the other, each is taking advantage of the other, and of course, neither partner is likely to see it this way, because that's so unflattering, but the only valid question is whether or not it is true.

Each partner has to examine their own heart and mind and answer for themselves. Happy are you if you can honestly do that. Now, what about the live-ins?

[39 : 24] Do you love me? Of course I love you, but, and that's upcoming. Unmarried Christians Living Together, Part 6 Whether a couple living together without marriage are Christians or not, there is every likelihood they have expressed their love for each other.

And, why in the world would you be willing to move in and live together with a partner who has not told you they love you, or you have not told them I love you? And, if you have exchanged your verbal I love you's, why then would you not make haste for the nearest wedding altar?

And, what do you suppose would be the most common response to that question? Here it is, whether expressed verbally or audibly or not, here would be the most common response.

Sure, yes, of course I love you, just don't love you enough to marry you. And, she may well express the same sentiments about him.

So, in reality, we may not be talking about love at all. We are talking about a mutually beneficial arrangement of simply living together. In this arrangement, we have a degree of companionship, shared expenses, available sexual satisfaction, all without any legal or binding obligations.

[41 : 02] And, love, actually, need not even enter the picture. Doesn't even need to be love, or claim to be love, on the part of either. Well, if it isn't, then, what would you call it?

The Bible calls it lust, in too many places to mention. Now, no doubt, some would resent that assessment, but they really need to think long and hard about it before they reject their behavior as plain, old, unvarnished, selfish, fleshly lust.

You realize the Bible doesn't trifle with truth, and it knows nothing about political correctness, the Bible just tells it like it is. So, do people, even Christian people, perhaps find this offensive?

Of course. Does it make them angry and defensive? Of course. Whenever our sin is pointed out to us, we almost always get mad before we get right, and sadly, some never do get right.

They just stay mad, much to their own regret. You know, there's an old saying that goes, if the cat doesn't like his fur being rubbed the wrong way, let the cat turn around.

[42 : 27] So, for either to say, I love you, but don't love you enough to marry you, each needs seriously question whether even a live-in situation is desirable. And what really is the issue here?

It isn't about living together without marriage at all, not in reality. In reality, it's all about the meaning of love. What is this thing called love? And this generation has gotten very erroneous and inequitable information as to what constitutes love.

This, one of the world's most priceless commodities, ranking right up there with truth, needs revisiting. Upcoming. Revisiting God's Grandest Theme, Part 1.

There may be no single theme that has been so misrepresented as that of the meaning of love. The gross mistreatments by Hollywood, television, and the Internet, to say nothing of the steamy novels proliferating by the millions, has succeeded in heaping tons of misinformation upon an often gullible public.

In fact, one cannot help but feel profoundly sorry for the upcoming young people who are daily bombarded by all the nonsense the mass media passes off as love.

[43 : 53] When it comes right down to it, only the Bible, which refers to God as the personification of love, gets it right and tells it straight. 1 John 4.8 reminds us that God is love.

It's part of his DNA, part of his character and nature. But let's start off, if we may, with the greatest area of misunderstanding by revealing what true love is not.

True love is not best defined as a feeling or emotion. Although love is usually accompanied by feelings and emotions, and we can't imagine life worth living without our emotions, don't even think that they are the stuff that love is made of.

Whatever would make us think they are, well, that's easy. Don't you remember the pitter-patter of your heart when you were with that special someone, perhaps as a teenager?

Why, there's no feeling like that in the entire world. And that first kiss? About as ecstatic as it can get. And can't even keep from touching that person.

[45 : 02] That's what mere hand holding is all about. How can there be anything mystical or magical about holding that special person's hand?

Hand holding? I don't know. All I know is the boy-girl chemistry that happens when Cupid shoots those arrows is the stuff of legends.

And I would not detract from those feelings at all. I applaud them. But these do not constitute love. They may accompany love, and I hope they do.

But these are feelings. They may come and go, but love sticks around. Love will be there in the morning. Love will be there in the evening.

And love will be there in the ending. That's the till death us do part thing. love. Emotions do not have the lasting energy that true love requires.

[46 : 03] That can only be provided by the will, the personal volition. That's the stuff of love. The feelings and emotions may well be the icing on the cake, but true love is the cake.

And the whole package consists of the cake and the icing. There is nothing on God's green earth that can begin to compare with it. Next up, the best definition of love I've ever heard.

And we will see how the Almighty himself acted it out. It's absolutely positively superb. Revisiting God's Grandest Theme, Part 2.

The most wonderful definition of love comes from an unknown source, and the words used to express it are not actually found in the Bible per se, but there is no question that God himself has fully fulfilled this definition, no matter who it was that originated it, so here it is.

I was so impressed with it, I committed it to memory. Love is saying the thing and doing the thing that is in the best interest of the object of that love.

[47 : 17] There it is. And it ties in well with the oft-used passage on love that is expressed at many weddings found in 1 Corinthians 13, often referred to as the great love chapter.

And in it we are told what love is not and what it is. Love is patient, kind, not jealous, does not boast, is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly, does not seek its own.

And if love does not seek its own, or its own well-being, whose does it seek? It seeks the well-being of the object of one's love. Because love, if anything, is all about not only togetherness, but about otherness, as opposed to all about self.

And as far as self is concerned, love is selfless, as opposed to selfish. Selfish comes to us naturally as part of our fallenness.

Selfless, is not natural, but supernatural. And this brings us right back to God. Because never in all of history has selfless love been on display as that which took place on Calvary 2,000 years ago.

[48 : 33] Tragedy of tragedy, here we are 2,000 years later with most of the world completely unaware of it. Love displayed at Calvary by both Father and Son constitute the greatest demonstration of love ever.

And it was all generated by the active volition, the doing of God. What God did in Christ was definitely in the best interest of the object of God's love.

And what was the object? The familiar John 3,16, the world that God so loved in such a way that he gave. Giving is the greatest act of love there is, and it has been said that we can give without loving, but we cannot love without giving.

God so loved that he gave. Now, if two people truly love each other, they are then in a perpetual mode of giving to each other.

Kindness, compassion, consideration, deference, patience, understanding, all provided in order to fulfill the best interest of the object of your love, whether it's husband to wife or wife to husband.

[49 : 46] A relationship that is not like that is not ready for the wedding altar, and a live-in without marriage will never produce this relationship.

But for a love that is like that, spending oneself to meet the needs of the object of your love, get to that altar and position yourselves to doing it for the rest of your life.

That's a marriage on a rock. Common Objections to Marriage Commitment, Part 1 Some objections to marriage that have made living together more appealing have already been treated, but there are others that should not be omitted, and answered as best we can.

Here is one you may have heard, or perhaps have even used yourself if you happen to be in a live-in relationship. It has to do with the legality or officiality of marriage in a given community, and it is often expressed thusly.

Well, it's just a piece of paper, that's all. What's a piece of paper between us? It's just a document saying it's okay for us to live together now that we were married and have that piece of paper.

[51 : 12] Well, we don't need it. It's just a piece of paper, okay? But tell me honestly now, do you feel that way about the title to your car?

If you own property, is the deed of ownership just a piece of paper? If you lease an apartment, is the lease just a piece of paper?

If you lend someone \$5,000 and they sign a promissory note that you hold, is it just a piece of paper? Of course not.

These are valuable documents that constitute proof of something, proof of ownership, proof of financial obligation, and such documentation goes back before paper was even discovered and documents were put on clay tablets.

It's all about recognition and declaration, whether of ownership or privilege. It's no different with marriage. A marriage certificate, issued through a local public government, indicates that the husband and wife have exclusive rights to each other, including property and assets in common.

[52 : 30] such a document, some would call just a piece of paper, becomes mighty important in legal proceedings, such as the death of a partner and the rights of inheritance.

To say a marriage license is just a piece of paper does nothing more than demean and depreciate the meaning of the marriage relationship.

relationship. That which ought to be held in highest regard is treated as commonplace, of no special significance. Well, now, does a wife want to be thought of as a part of no special significance?

Let her answer for herself. And the same is no less true for the husband, if they will both stop and think about it. Now, this is not an appeal for non-Christians to rethink their live-in situation, since they have a much greater problem and are already probably not interested in the least in what the Bible says.

But such should surely not be the case for professing believers in Christ. Really, now? Just a piece of paper? Come on!

[53 : 45] We all know better than that, don't we? Just a piece of paper? Common Objections to Marital Commitment, Part 2 When a particular social practice that was once unacceptable begins happening with more and more frequency, it tends to become less unacceptable, and more and more acceptable.

So it is with marriage, not only in North America, but in many other parts of the world. Here in the USA, society once frowned on or downright condemned the very idea of a man and woman living together without marriage.

In short, it's now described as no big deal, and no longer even raises eyebrows, much less produces disapproval. Most people are conditioned by whatever the mass of society approves, often even extending to issues of morality.

Many are content for their culture to dictate right and wrong to them, and they fall in lockstep with whatever that culture prescribes. One can understand the world at large embracing this kind of thinking, because unregenerate people usually do line up behind the herd instinct.

But all too often, so may regenerated people who certainly ought to know better. Rationale for living together without marriage has often been justified by believers with a all our friends are doing it.

[55 : 32] What may be another of many rationales for living together without marriage? Well, one often heard usually comes from the woman, and it goes like this.

If I don't let him move in with me and play house, I'm afraid I'll lose him. While it's true, sometimes it's the woman who wants to live in, rather than a marriage, but more often, certainly in the majority of cases, it's the man who pushes for the live-in arrangements.

An old saying that prevails among the male establishment asks the question, Why buy a cow when you get all the free milk you want?

To be sure, that's a crass, cruel saying that simply objectifies and demeans women, but it does go on a lot, especially among males with the women absent.

And when the woman gives in to his demands, that often comes across as, Either we live together and move in together, or I'm out of here.

[56 : 40] Then she does so out of fear of losing him. Besides, she hopes to make him appreciate the live-in relationship so much he will be willing to make the commitment and actually marry her.

This temptation, which may have been before her for years, usually doesn't get put into action. Yet, hope does spring eternal, so she hangs in there, playing house and providing all the wifely benefits without any commitment or semblance of security.

Sadly, it's a familiar picture of a woman lowering his standards that allow a man to take advantage of her, and a man who jumps at the chance to do it. Both are at fault, and both will ultimately regret it.

Common Objections to Marriage Commitment, Part 3 Anyone who has had the painful experience of growing up in a family torn by marital strife may well feel justified in not entering into a traditional marriage relationship.

They want no part of the kind of situation they were made to grow up in, and feel the best way to assure that doesn't happen is simply not to get married.

[58 : 03] Living together is okay, because you can always leave much easier than if you marry. Besides, why would you think your union would be any different from that painful one that scarred and scared you in your childhood?

You recall the bitter fights, the constant quarreling and disharmony that sometimes kept you awake at night, while you and your siblings heard the fighting?

Now, this sad and painful experience, even though it is far from what marriage is supposed to be, it was, nevertheless, the only marriage you saw up close and personal, and you want no part in repeating that scenario in a marriage you fear you would have.

One can understand and truly sympathize with any who were subjected to such an upbringing. Many of those bitter memories were fueled by drug or alcohol addiction, which always adds another dimension of pain, deprivation, and insecurity.

One cannot dismiss or minimize the painful memories you have of your childhood. At the same time, you may be confidently assured you are not doomed to repeat that kind of scenario should you enter into the marriage relationship, especially if God is in the picture.

[59 : 33] While it is true, we do tend to repeat whatever role model was set before us in growing up, whether it was good or bad, simply because it was the only model lived out before us, and we do tend to reproduce according to our model, again, whether good or bad.

The good news, however, to be delivered to you, is that there can be a new dynamic introduced into your life that can and will dramatically override your painful role model of the past and make your marriage relationship radically different from the one you suffered in while growing up.

That dynamic, of course, is the love and person of Jesus Christ, who specializes in changing and enriching the lives of those who come to Him.

Christ alone provides not only forgiveness and salvation, but the basis for a whole new life, including that of marriage.

It's called a marriage on the rock, and Christ Himself is that rock. You give your life and marriage or potential marriage to Him, and it will be far removed from that painful experience you endured in your childhood.

[61 : 03] Common Objections to Marriage Commitment, Part 4. As hard as it is to believe, especially for those of us who may be married and in a till death us do part traditional marriage, there actually are those who simply do not want that kind of relationship.

They tell us they would not want a mate to feel such an obligation as to be married to them for a lifetime. Their fear is they would become bored in such a union, would feel stuck and unable to do anything about it.

And they go on to state they would even feel guilty in expecting a mate to be with them for the duration of their lives. These take comfort in the fact that neither of them can just feel free to pack up and bow out for whatever reason they choose.

This, no doubt, would be a working definition of a free love with no strings attached. And what is more, some go so far as to not object if their live-in shows interest in another party, and even chooses to live with that other party temporarily or permanently by leaving them for another altogether.

And they themselves have the same prerogative. This is what is meant by living in an open marriage. Each partner is free to come and go as they please, with whomever they please, whenever they please.

[62 : 39] It's hard to know how many relationships like this exist, since statistics are not available, but given the climate that exists today, the suspicion is that it probably goes on more than we think.

While most of us, especially those in a committed marriage union, look upon such a lifestyle with shock and dismay, those who conduct an open marriage consider themselves to be truly free and unencumbered, while we traditionalists, in their viewpoint, suffer in what they regard as marital bondage.

And while we feel they do not know what they are missing, they feel precisely the same about us. The bottom line is, we appeal to the source to whom we believe set all the standards for love, marriage, and fidelity, with the belief that the God who ordained marriage and all it entails really knew what he was doing.

And his love for us is another example of him doing what is in the best interest of us as the objects of his love.

This also includes the marriage union. Those engaging in the open marriage feel there is no authority above themselves to tell them how to conduct a relationship, whether marriage, live-in, same-sex, multiple partners, or whatever.

[64 : 12] So like we said early on, the issue is authority. Always has been, always will be. Who we recognize as our ultimate authority will determine the lives we lead and with whom and how we live them.

And whatever the choice, the consequences will follow, whether good or bad. The issue remains authority. Common Objections to Marital Commitment Part 5 Weddings are expensive.

Have you any idea what an average wedding gown costs nowadays? And the reception? The caterer? The photographer? The church or hall to rent?

These things are costly beyond belief. Not only that, but I don't want to burden my parents to lay out money they can't afford for a traditional expensive wedding.

My intended and I would prefer to just move in together and consider ourselves married, sort of, and avoid all the stress, the planning, and the expense of the wedding.

[65 : 27] Besides, we talk to our parents about it. They are aware that so many of my friends have done this, and they are okay with it. So, what's wrong with this?

Well, for starters, it's the old flesh and fornication problem mentioned a few segments earlier on Marriage on the Rock. And, overall, there remains that issue of authority, and whether you want to conduct this relationship of marriage God's way or the way your friends and the culture are paving for you.

The issue does remain to be authority, doesn't it? Yours and the world's or God's? God's union, conducted and carried out God's way, will never lack for God's blessing.

That will be a Marriage on the Rock, and there is absolutely nothing to compare to that joy on all of God's green earth. Now, as regards the wedding and the expense, please don't try to match or exceed the wedding someone else had.

Be your own person. You don't have to have a wedding as grand as the wedding of so-and-so, not even if it was your sister or one of your close friends.

[66 : 47] This is not a wedding competition we're talking about. This wedding of yours can be one of minimal expense, yet very dignified and honoring to God and both families of the bride and groom.

Simplicity need not be undignified. What is undignified is the incurring of a huge expense and debt that is stressful to all concerned.

So, talk with your pastor or clergy person, and they will work with you to provide a wedding that is God-honoring and memorable to all who attend.

And if, perchance, a pastor will not do that, which is unthinkable, but should that occur, you may be in the wrong church with the wrong pastor. A ceremony that is honoring to the God who ordained marriage and memory-building for the couple getting married is the kind of wedding you need, and you need not break the bank to do it.

Every girl needs her special day when being beautiful and wedded to her special guy, and every groom needs the nervousness that accompanies the repeating of his vows of love and honor to this special girl to whom he is pledging his life and honor, while God smiles on in approval.

[68 : 06] Don't settle for a living when you can have this. It's the start of a marriage on a rock. When a child is born to live-ins There are lots of things we can regard children being responsible for when they show up, whether expected or unexpected.

And first and foremost, there is the blessing factor. No addition to a couple's relationship has the potential for greater blessing and enjoyment than that of a child, and nothing so radically impacts their lifestyle than a child.

Parents who are at all responsible recognize the entry of a brand-new human being who is made in their image and in the image of God that is entirely dependent upon them.

And for that child to be reared in a stable, loving environment is essential to their development and well-being. There is no better way that parents can provide that environment than for themselves to be in a stable relationship together.

Such stability is impossible, so long as either can freely walk away from the child's environment. Here again, that unselfish giving aspect of love comes into focus.

[69 : 34] Mom and Dad are called upon to be giving caretakers of the children they bring into the world. This is to be done joyfully and lovingly, but only when these parents are fully and unconditionally committed to each other in a relationship described as married, not merely living together.

The best gift any parent can give their child is to be deeply in love with their spouse. Absolutely nothing builds emotional security and stability into a child's life more than this.

Such a loving relationship, enjoyed by the parents, impacts the child's mental, emotional, and psychological health. And when the child enters school, with that stable relationship at home to support him or her, their learning and socialization with their young peers and the teacher's authority are greatly enhanced.

What this all boils down to is that the quality of their parents' relationship will be a key factor to their child's maturity and eventual success as an adult.

Some may feel all this can be realized by parents who are not married, but have only a live-in relationship. We strongly disagree, because such would negate God's plan for a mom and dad to be together in full commitment to each other so as to provide the environment God intended and the child needs.

[71 : 14] And for any who are live-ins that insist they already have that kind of commitment, then what is the objection to making it official by marriage? If the objection is the freedom to leave the relationship is then gone, that in itself proves the environment mentioned doesn't really exist at all, even though both partners may insist it does.

There is simply no substitute for doing relationships, including marriage and parenthood, the way God designed. Anything less is woefully substandard.

You've been listening to Marriage on the Rock with Marv Wiseman. A preview of Volume 13, Upcoming.

The entirety of this present Volume 12 of Marriage on the Rock has been devoted to the earliest concepts of marriage and the ingredients that are part of it.

Recall, if you will, how we made the distinction between the wedding and the marriage. The former may take only minutes, but the latter is intended for the lifetime of the partners.

[72 : 24] We briefly revealed reasons given for opting to merely live in together without marriage, as so many are doing in today's culture. We spoke of the temptation of fornication and the potential problems created by simply ignoring what God has forbidden.

We emphasized how that to marry or to become live-ins largely depends on what each couple accepts as their ultimate authority. For Christians, already recipients of God's love and forgiveness, the best way we can show our gratitude to God for our salvation is by doing relationships His way, not the way of the current fad in our culture.

And not the way of live-ins, because many of our friends are doing it. And not the way of financial affordability, and not the way that makes walking away from the relationship easy, but the way that God Himself has set forth.

Because God is deeply concerned about our lives and how we live them. So greatly is He concerned that He has established the formula for maximizing everything a relationship can be between a man and a woman.

It's called marriage. Marriage that is entered into and conducted in God's way will never lack for God's provision and blessing.

[73 : 53] His way alone can produce a marriage built upon the rock of which Christ speaks in Matthew chapter 7. The words and authority of Christ Himself require the commitment of a man and woman in Christ to provide the kind of family setting and stability that only marriage can provide.

God's way or some other. Choice is yours, and whatever your choice may be, it will entail the predictable consequences that always follow our choices, whether good or bad.

For Christians who profess to know and love the Lord, the choice should be clear. In actuality, it is human arrogance of the rankest sort for us to replace the wisdom of God with our own, or that of the world.

Going with God means you cannot go wrong, no matter what our friends or culture may dictate to the contrary, and always bear in mind that God has set forth His standards for our blessing and protection, and He has done so out of the amazing love He has for us.

How can any believer turn a deaf ear to that? Our upcoming Volume 13 of Marriage on the Rock will consist of a variety of issues, all of which every marriage faces at one time or another.

[75 : 17] Our goal remains that of encouraging and enabling committed marriages to realize the very best that is available on the planet. And our conviction is that God has already made available to all who are in Christ everything that is needed for the believer's marriage relationship, and for it to be the closest thing to heaven while yet living on this earth.

Where this is not realized by believers can only be due to one or both partners not knowing or not applying the God-given principles to their marriage.

Revealing those principles and encouraging Christians to avail themselves of them is what Marriage on the Rock is all about. This is Pastor Marv Wiseman thanking you so much for being a participant in Marriage on the Rock and praying God's richest blessing on you.

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