

Becoming One: God's Biblical Design for Marriage

Reverse the Curse

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Becoming One: Reverse the Curse

Genesis 2:24–25 NLT

This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one. Now the man and his wife were both naked, but they felt no shame.

Galatians 3:13–14 NLT

But Christ has rescued us from the curse pronounced by the law. When he was hung on the cross, he took upon himself the curse for our wrongdoing. For it is written in the Scriptures, “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.” Through Christ Jesus, God has blessed the Gentiles with the same blessing he promised to Abraham, so that we who are believers might receive the promised Holy Spirit through faith.

Genesis 3:6–7 NLT

The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. At that moment, their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.

Genesis 3:8–19 NLT

When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the Lord God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the Lord God among the trees. Then the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?”

He replied, “I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked.”

“Who told you that you were naked?” the Lord God asked. “Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat?”

The man replied, “It was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it.”

Then the Lord God asked the woman, “What have you done?”

“The serpent deceived me,” she replied. “That’s why I ate it.”

Then the Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all animals, domestic and wild. You will crawl on your belly, groveling in the dust as long as you live. And I will cause hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.”

Then he said to the woman, “I will sharpen the pain of your pregnancy, and in pain you will give birth. And you will desire to control your husband, but he will rule over you.”

And to the man he said, “Since you listened to your wife and ate from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat, the ground is cursed because of you. All your life, you will struggle to scratch a living from it. It will grow thorns and thistles for you, though you will eat of its grains. By the sweat of your brow will you have food to eat until you return to the ground from which you were made. For you were made from dust, and to dust you will return.”

When marriage becomes about control, we are living in the curse, not the blessing.

Ephesians 5:21 NLT

And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Submission means choosing to align my will and my desires with my spouse's.

Ephesians 5:22–24 NLT

For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For a husband is the head of his wife as *Christ is the head of the church*. He is the Savior of his body, the church. As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything.

Ephesians 5:25–33 NLT

For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God’s word. He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault. In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself. No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it,

just as Christ cares for the church. And we are members of his body. As the Scriptures say, “A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.” This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one. So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Hebrews 12:2 NLT

Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame.

Matthew 20:26–28 NLT

“But among you,” [Jesus said,] “it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must become your slave. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Marriages thrive when wives submit to their husbands AS they would to Jesus, and when husbands lay down their lives for their wives, serving them AS Jesus serves His church.

Small Group Guide: Reverse the Curse

Opening Question

What's one thing you appreciate most about God's design for marriage? Or, if you're single, what is your vision for a healthy, thriving relationship?

Our marriages are deeply impacted by the fall. Genesis 3 reveals how sin introduced shame, control, and a desire to dominate, disrupting God's original design of harmony and trust. But the Good News is that through Jesus' death and resurrection, the curse is broken.

Galatians 3:13-14 reminds us that Christ has rescued us from the curse so that we can live in God's blessing in every area of our lives, including our marriages. Jesus made a way for husbands and wives to return to that garden-like unity where love, trust, and mutual respect flourish.

Genesis 3 describes how sin's aftermath turned relationships into power struggles, where fear, blame, and control replaced authentic love. Control often stems from a broken view of love, trying to meet our own needs rather than trusting God's order. But the Bible reveals a different way—one rooted in humility, sacrifice, and trust.

The "as" statements in Ephesians 5 clarify how marriage is meant to reflect Christ's love and leadership. When Paul says wives should submit "as to the Lord," and husbands should love "as Christ loved the church," he's pointing us to a model rooted in Jesus' example. Submission "as to the Lord" means willing obedience out of reverence for Jesus—not fear or domination, but trust that His way is best. It's a voluntary act of faith that aligns your heart with God's divine order and reflects your reverence for Christ.

Likewise, a husband's love "as Christ loved the church" is sacrificial, self-giving, and motivated by a desire to serve and elevate his wife. This kind of love isn't about control or hierarchy, but about humility—laying down one's life for the good of the other, just as Jesus did.

Understanding that these “as” comparisons are about following Jesus’ perfect example completely transforms marriage. When spouses embrace this model, love and trust replace fear and control. In doing so, the curse begins to be reversed, and God’s blessing flows freely.

When God is at the center, wives trust and respect, and husbands serve selflessly. This divine order reflects God’s original design and becomes a powerful testimony of His redemptive love.

For Discussion

1. Genesis 3 describes the introduction of shame, control, and a struggle for dominance in marriage. How has this curse shown up in your own experience? How does understanding this help us find hope for change?
2. The biblical model calls for wives to submit “as to the Lord” and husbands to love “as Christ loved the church.” How can this look practically in your everyday life? Are there areas where this is challenging?
3. How does focusing on Jesus’ sacrificial love inspire you to love and serve your spouse more intentionally?
4. What steps can you take today to operate more “as” to Christ or “as” Christ loves, in your marriage?