



Living Well

The Greatest Love Story



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The First Bridegroom and His Bride

Check out these websites for more information:

- www.livingwelloc.org
- www.livingwelloc.blogspot.com
- www.desiringgod.org
- www.frometernitytohere.org

The Bible opens with a wedding

The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man." For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. Genesis 2:22-24 (NIV)

..... and closes with a wedding.

Let us rejoice and be glad and give Him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready... One of the seven angels ... came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.

Revelation 19:7; 21:9;22:17 (NIV)

The greatest love story of all time is about what happens between the first two chapters and the last two.

"Every love story that the minds of mortal men and women construct, every love story that has made its appearance in the pages of human history - whether fiction or nonfiction - is but a reflection, a pale image, a faint portrait, a scrambled version of the sacred romance of the ages. God has authored the most incredible lover story ever written." *From Eternity to Here* by Frank Viola

The first wedding describes a man, Adam, created by God and in the image of God, who meets his bride, Eve. The bride was created out of the life of Adam. God made Eve from the rib of Adam, to be the perfect companion, mate, helper, lover to Adam.

Adam exclaimed when seeing her *Here is someone like me! She is part of my body, my own flesh and bones. She came from me, a man.* (CEV)

The Fall wrecked that idyllic first marriage - they battle for control, having kids was a pain, and providing for the family was hard work; yet the passion of marriage always remained.

But God's story was written on a grander scale. He says that their passion is a picture of His passion for us, *as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you.* (Isaiah 62:5b)

Many people believe the story in the Song of Solomon is not only about a real bridegroom and his bride but also about God's love for his people. *You have captured my heart, my treasure, my bride....Your love delights me, my treasure, my bride.* Song of Sol. 4:9-10 (NLT)

But there is more to the story See the other side.

On the other side:

The 2nd Adam and His Bride

What does that mean for me?

So what?

What does this story have to do with my marriage today?

Ever since the Fall, marriage has been difficult. It is not just your husband or your wife or you that makes your marriage hard, all relationships are hard.

John Piper in his book, *This Momentary Marriage*, puts it this way:

The foundation of covenant-keeping love collapsed. And with it the sweet, all-trusting security of marriage disappeared forever. She [Eve, all of us] is essentially now a selfish person. From this day forward, she will put herself first. She is no longer a servant. So she is not safe. And I feel vulnerable around her, because she is very likely to put me down if that puts her up.... I don't trust her anymore to love me with pure, covenant-keeping love.... If she is

rebellious and selfish, and therefore unsafe, so am I.... I ought to be humbly and gladly submissive to God. But I am not. This huge gap between what I am and what I ought to be colors everything about me.

How do we live in marriage when we are so selfish? God's grace. The grace He extends towards us with forgiveness and acceptance, we can extend toward our spouse through the Holy Spirit at work in us.

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Living Well a life source, not a lifestyle

The water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life. John 4:14

The 2nd Adam and His Bride

If God is love, then there must be in Him a Lover, a Beloved, and a Spirit of love; for no love is conceivable without a Lover and a Beloved. Augustine

God the Father is the source of all love and has always been from all eternity past. Jesus, His son, is the object of His love. *And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."* Matthew 3:17 (NIV)

Just as in the beginning, God saw Adam, his aloneness, and made someone like him for him to love. God saw the aloneness of His Son. He made a Bride for His Son.

The 2nd Adam is Jesus Christ, the Son.

Now Adam is a symbol, a representation of Christ, who was yet to come. Romans 5:14b
The last Adam—that is, Christ—is a life-giving Spirit. 1 Corinthians 15:45 (NLT)

"So when God made man, there were two beings in the universe that were vibrating with an insatiable passion: the Son of God in heaven and Adam on earth. The frustrated passion of a love-filled God and the frustrated passion of a human made in His image. Then, on one non-day in the past, God the Father conceived a plan. It was a staggering plan. It was to give His Son a companion, one who would match Him perfectly. One who would be just like Him, yet not

Him. That being would be the Son of God in a different form. That being would also become the object of the Son's passion, a wife worthy of deity." From Eternity to Here, Frank Viola

The Bride for Christ is the Church - it is you and it is me. He loves the Church passionately. *"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.* Eph.5:31-32 (NIV)

Paul Billheimer describes the relationship, "A godly romance is at the heart of the universe and is the key to all existence. From all

eternity God purposed that at some point in the future His Son should have an Eternal Companion, described John the Revelator as 'the bride, the Lamb's wife.'"

The end of His story describes a great wedding between Jesus Christ, the Son, the Lamb of God, and His Bride: *Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.* Revelation 19:7;21:9;22:17 (NIV)

What does that mean for me?

Have you ever thought about the Big Picture of what marriage means?

Since marriage is a picture of Christ and His Bride (the Church), we can ask and answer several questions for own life.

If my marriage is a picture of Christ and the Church, what is my marriage telling the world about how Christ loves? How the Church responds to His love? (see Eph. 5:22-33)

If Christ loves the church as a bridegroom passionately loves his bride

when they marry, have I ever seen Jesus Christ's love for me in that way, in that intensity? A love that would go to any length to draw the Bride to him? A love that will never leave and never forsake me, no matter what? (see Rom. 8:28-39)

How am I responding to the ultimate love of my life? (see 1 John 4:7-19)