MINISTÈRE DU PASTEUR CLÉMENT SALOMON · BIBLE STUDY #26

Marriage and Family: God's Design for Love

Before there was a nation, a temple or a church, God made a home. What did He have in mind — and is there hope for yours?

The smell of burnt rice filled the whole apartment. Marie-Claude stood at the stove and did not move. She was not crying about the rice.

She and Jean-Robert had been married twenty-two years. They came from Haiti to Miami with two suitcases and a big dream. They worked hard. He drove a delivery truck. She worked nights at a nursing home. They raised three children and paid every bill.

But somewhere along the way, they stopped talking. Not fighting — just not talking. "Did you pay the light bill?" "The car needs tires." "Who is picking up the baby?" That was all.

They slept in the same bed and felt like strangers. They sat in the same church pew and did not hold hands anymore.

That evening, Jean-Robert came home late again. He saw the black pot. He saw his wife's back. And he said the words that usually started a cold night: "What happened now?"

Marie-Claude turned around. In her hand was something he had not seen in years — the little white Bible from their wedding day.

Hold on to that little white Bible. Because what was written inside the cover is where this study is going. And it begins in a garden, on the sixth day of the world.

The first wedding

When God made the world, He kept saying, "It is good." Light — good. Land and sea — good. Plants and animals — good. Then, for the first time, God said something was *not* good:

> *"And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him."*
>
> **Genesis 2:18 (KJV)**

Adam had a perfect garden. He had a perfect job. He even walked with God. But he was alone, and God said, "Not good."

So God made the woman and brought her to the man. That was the first wedding — and God Himself was the One who walked the bride down the aisle. Then the Bible gives us God's design in one sentence:

> *"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."*
>
> **Genesis 2:24 (KJV)**

Three words carry the whole plan. **Leave** — a new home begins; husband and wife put each other first. **Cleave** — hold on tight; stay together. **One flesh** — two lives woven into one, body and heart.

Marriage was not invented by a government or a culture. It was God's idea, from the very beginning, before sin ever entered the world. Just like the Sabbath, it is a gift from Eden.

Jesus says: from the beginning

Many years later, some religious leaders tried to trap Jesus with a question about divorce. In their day, a man could send his wife away for almost any reason. Jesus did not answer with the customs of His time. He took them all the way back to the garden:

> *"Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."*
>
> **Matthew 19:4-6 (KJV)**

Notice what Jesus says. God made them "male and female." God joins them. And what God joins is meant to last for life. Marriage is not only a promise between two people. It is a promise made *in front of God*, with God.

That is why the Bible treats marriage with such honor. It is holy ground.

Love that looks like the cross

So what kind of love holds a marriage together for thirty, forty, fifty years? Not just the warm feeling of the wedding day. Feelings come and go like the weather. God shows a deeper love:

> *"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it."*
>
> **Ephesians 5:25 (KJV)**

How did Christ love the church? He did not demand. He did not push. He served. He gave Himself — all the way to the cross. That is the pattern. The Bible also says, "Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them" (Colossians 3:19), and it calls both husband and wife to give way to each other "in the fear of God" (Ephesians 5:21).

In God's design, love never means control. It never means fear. It never means harm. Christ's love makes the other person safe, and helps them grow.

And what does that love look like on a normal Tuesday? Paul wrote a famous description. Read it slowly:

> *"Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."*
>
> **1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (KJV)**

"Charity" in old English means love — God's kind of love. Look at the words: patient, kind, not proud, not rude, not selfish, not quick to anger. These are not feelings. They are choices. You can choose to be kind tonight even if you are tired. You can choose patience in traffic, at the dinner table, in the bedroom, with the bills.

Try this: read those verses again and put your own name where it says "charity." It is humbling. None of us can love like that alone. That is why we need the One who loved us first: "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

When two sinners live under one roof

Here is the truth no wedding photo shows. Every marriage is two imperfect people under one roof. There will be hurt words, forgotten promises, and silent dinners. So God gives one more tool — maybe the most important one:

> *"Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."*
> **Colossians 3:13 (KJV)**

"Forbearing" means putting up with each other's weaknesses — the snoring, the late arrivals, the different ways of doing things. "Forgiving" goes deeper. It means letting go of the debt, the way Jesus let go of ours.

Forgiveness does not mean saying, "It didn't hurt." The verse says there may be a real "quarrel." Forgiveness means saying, "It hurt — and I choose not to hold it over you anymore." Sometimes it means a hard, honest talk first. Sometimes it means asking a pastor or a trusted counselor to help.

A home where people say "I'm sorry" and "I forgive you" is not a perfect home. It is a *healing* home.

An important word about safety. God's design is love that does not harm (1 Corinthians 13:4-5; Ephesians 5:25). This study never asks anyone to stay in a home where they or their children are being hurt, threatened or controlled. If you are in danger, call **911**. In the U.S. you can also call the National Domestic Violence Hotline, **1-800-799-7233**, any time. Getting safe is not a lack of faith. This is spiritual encouragement, not counseling or legal advice.

Raising children gently, in the Lord

God's design for the home includes children. Parents are the first teachers a child ever has — of love, of faith, of what God is like. Listen to this:

> *"And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."*
>
> **Ephesians 6:4 (KJV)**

Notice the first part. Before telling parents what to do, God tells them what *not* to do: do not crush your children's spirit. Colossians says the same thing and gives the reason: "Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged" (Colossians 3:21).

"Nurture" means feeding and caring, like a gardener caring for a young plant. "Admonition" means gentle teaching and correction. Children need both — warm arms and clear lines. And they learn the most not from our sermons, but from watching how we treat each other.

A child who sees a father ask a mother for forgiveness learns more about the gospel than a hundred lectures can teach.

- Pray with your children — even one short prayer at bedtime.
- Say "I love you" and "I'm proud of you" out loud.
- Correct the action, never mock the child.
- Let them see you open your Bible (our study *"The Family Altar"* shows how to start family worship).
- When you get it wrong, say so — and ask them to forgive you.

Grace for every home

Maybe while reading this, you are thinking, "That is not my story." Maybe you are single. Maybe you are divorced, or widowed, or raising children alone. Maybe your parents' home was a place of pain.

Hear this clearly: **God's design is not a wall to keep you out. It is a picture to give you hope.** Jesus was single. Paul was single. And God calls Himself "a father of the fatherless" and the One who "setteth the solitary in families" (Psalm 68:5-6). In God's family, the church, no one has to be alone.

And for every tired couple, here is the promise that started this whole journey:

> *"Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it."*
> **Psalm 127:1 (KJV)**

You cannot fix your home alone. But you do not have to. The God who performed the first wedding still knows how to build a house.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church sums up this Bible teaching like this: marriage was established by God in Eden and affirmed by Jesus as a lifelong union between a man and a woman in loving companionship; for the Christian it is a commitment both to God and to the spouse, built on mutual love, honor, respect and responsibility; parents are to bring up their children to love and obey the Lord; and the family is meant to reflect the love of Christ (see Fundamental Belief #23, "Marriage and the Family," in the Church's own words).

Marriage is **God's idea** — from Eden. It is held together by **Christ's kind of love** — patient, kind, self-giving. And it grows by **grace** — "I'm sorry," "I forgive you," and "Lord, build our house."

What was written in the little white Bible

Jean-Robert took the Bible from his wife's hand. He opened the cover. There, in his own handwriting from twenty-two years ago, was a verse and a date. He had written it the night before their wedding, when he was young and nervous and full of hope:

"Except the LORD build the house..." — Psalm 127:1

Under it, in a young man's careful letters: *"Lord, You build it. We will live in it."*

Marie-Claude said quietly, "I found it today while cleaning. And I realized — we stopped letting Him build. We just kept working."

Jean-Robert sat down at the kitchen table. For a long time he said nothing. Then he said the hardest words a tired man can say: "I'm sorry. I left you alone in this house."

They did not fix twenty-two years in one night. But that night they prayed together for the first time in years — over a burnt pot of rice. The next week they asked their pastor for help. And

every evening after that, before the television, before the bills, they read one verse together and asked God to build their house again.

God is still in the business of weddings — and of second beginnings. Whatever your home looks like tonight, He can begin to build. Will you let Him?

(Marie-Claude and Jean-Robert are an illustrative story, drawn from what many families live; any resemblance to specific people is coincidental.)

Before you close this — one question

Is your home tired? Too much work, too little talking, too many old hurts? Or maybe you are praying for a home you do not have yet.

You do not have to carry it alone. We would be honored to pray for your marriage, your children, or your future home — and to open the Bible with you.

Would you like to know more about Jesus, study the Bible, or go deeper on this topic? Reach us today:

📞 **903-748-9353** · ✉️ **jils19802012@gmail.com**
Or leave a comment, send us a direct message, and **subscribe + follow** on YouTube and Facebook.

Don't miss what's next. God spoke to Adam and Eve face to face in the garden. Does He still speak today — and how can we tell His voice from all the others? Our next study: *"The Gift of Prophecy: God Still Speaks."* Subscribe now so it reaches you the moment it's out. If you wait, you'll have to come find it. 🔔

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Viewer Handout

Marriage and Family: God's Design for Love — pocket version

5 truths to remember

1. Marriage is God's idea from Eden: a man and a woman leave, cleave and become one flesh (Genesis 2:18, 24).
2. Jesus confirmed God's design "from the beginning": a lifelong union that God Himself joins (Matthew 19:4-6).
3. Christ's self-giving love is the pattern — love that serves and never controls or harms (Ephesians 5:25; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7).
4. Imperfect homes heal through forbearing and forgiving, as Christ forgave us (Colossians 3:13).
5. Parents raise children gently in the Lord, and God builds every home that trusts Him — married, single, or alone (Ephesians 6:4; Psalm 68:5-6; Psalm 127:1).

Memory verse

> *"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."*
>
> **Genesis 2:24 (KJV)**

Think & pray about it

- Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 with your own name in place of "charity." Which line is hardest for me right now?
- Is there an old hurt in my home that I need to forgive — or to ask forgiveness for?
- What is one small thing I can do this week to let God "build the house" — one prayer, one kind word, one verse together?

FOR TEACHERS & SMALL GROUPS

Presenter Bullet Sheet

- **Open with the story** (an illustrative story: Marie-Claude and Jean-Robert, a Haitian couple in Miami, 22 years married, who only talk about bills; a burnt pot of rice; she is holding their wedding Bible) — ask: "Can a tired home become a loving home again?"
- **Point 1 — The first wedding:** Genesis 2:18, 24. "Not good" to be alone; God brings the bride; leave, cleave, one flesh. Marriage is a gift from Eden, like the Sabbath.
- **Point 2 — Jesus says "from the beginning":** Matthew 19:4-6. Male and female; God joins; meant for life; a promise made before God.
- **Point 3 — Love that looks like the cross:** Ephesians 5:21, 25; Colossians 3:19; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7; 1 John 4:19. Love serves; it never controls, frightens or harms. Love is a choice, not just a feeling. Name-in-the-blank exercise.
- **Point 4 — Two sinners under one roof:** Colossians 3:13. Forbearing and forgiving; forgiveness is not denial; seek a pastor or counselor when needed.
- **Safety note (read aloud):** no one is asked to stay where they or their children are being hurt; call 911 in danger; U.S. National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-7233. Not counseling or legal advice.
- **Point 5 — Raising children gently:** Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21. Do not crush their spirit; nurture + gentle teaching; children learn the gospel by watching us. Link to "The Family Altar."
- **Point 6 — Grace for every home:** Psalm 68:5-6; Psalm 127:1. Singles, divorced, widowed, single parents and those from painful homes all have a place in God's family. Reference Fundamental Belief #23 in the Church's own words.
- **Close the story:** the verse written in the wedding Bible (Psalm 127:1) — "Lord, You build it. We will live in it." An apology, a prayer over the burnt rice, help from the pastor, one verse every evening.
- **Appeal:** invite couples to pray together tonight, parents to bless their children, and everyone to ask God to build their house — whatever it looks like now.
- **Close:** memory verse (Genesis 2:24) + "God's idea, Christ's love, God's grace" + tease the next study ("The Gift of Prophecy: God Still Speaks").

EVIDENCE-BASED · FACT-CHECKED

10 Myths vs. Facts

Myth	Fact (with Bible)
1. Marriage is just a human custom or a legal contract.	God established it in Eden before sin (Genesis 2:18, 24), and Jesus said, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matthew 19:6).
2. Real love is a feeling — when the feeling goes, love is gone.	Bible love is a set of choices: it "suffereth long, and is kind… seeketh not her own" (1 Corinthians 13:4-5).
3. The Bible gives husbands permission to rule harshly.	Husbands are to love "even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25) and not be bitter against their wives (Colossians 3:19).
4. A Christian must stay in a home where they are being abused.	God's love does not harm (1 Corinthians 13:4-5; Ephesians 5:25). Safety comes first — in danger, call 911. Seeking safety is not a lack of faith.
5. Forgiving means pretending it did not hurt.	The Bible names the real "quarrel" — then calls us to forgive "even as Christ forgave you" (Colossians 3:13).
6. Strict, harsh discipline is the biblical way to raise children.	"Provoke not your children to wrath" (Ephesians 6:4), "lest they be discouraged" (Colossians 3:21). Raise them in nurture and gentle teaching.
7. Leaving father and mother means abandoning your parents.	A new home begins (Genesis 2:24), yet we still "honour thy father and mother" (Ephesians 6:2).
8. Single people are less complete in God's eyes.	Jesus never married; Paul, who was single, called his state a gift from God (1 Corinthians 7:7-8); and every believer is "complete in him" (Colossians 2:10).
9. A broken or tired home is beyond hope.	"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (2 Corinthians 5:17); God "setteth the solitary in families" (Psalm 68:6).
10. A strong family is built by hard work alone.	"Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it" (Psalm 127:1). "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

Where this comes from (Sources)

This study is built on the Bible and reflects the published beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Verify everything for yourself:

- The Bible — passages on marriage and the family: Genesis 2:18, 24; Psalm 68:5-6; Psalm 127:1; Matthew 19:4-6; 1 Corinthians 7:7-8; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 5:21, 25; Ephesians 6:2, 4; Colossians 2:10; Colossians 3:13, 19, 21; 1 John 4:19 (King James Version, public domain).
- Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Belief #23, "Marriage and the Family" — official beliefs: https://adventist.org/beliefs (please read the statement there in full, in the Church's own words).
- 28 Fundamental Beliefs (2020 edition, PDF): https://adventist.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/ADV-28Beliefs2020.pdf
- General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists: https://gc.adventist.org/
- Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, chapter "Builders of the Home," and *The Adventist Home* (compiled from her writings), public domain: https://whiteestate.org/ / https://m.egwwritings.org/
- Safety resource (U.S.): National Domestic Violence Hotline, 1-800-799-7233 — https://www.thehotline.org/ · Emergency: 911.
- Related studies in this library: *"The Family Altar"*, *"Forgiveness: Free at Last"*, *"The Church: God's Family"* and *"One in Christ: Unity in God's Family"* — https://pasteurclementsalomon.org/resources.html · Questions? https://pasteurclementsalomon.org/faq.html · Faith Journey: https://pasteurclementsalomon.org/journey.html

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