



Chapter 1

DISPLAYING THE GLORY OF GOD



“Glorify the Lord with me; let us exalt His name together.” ~ Psalm 34:3

CHAPTER PURPOSE

How a husband and wife love each other in their marriage puts God on display. This lesson will help you understand the importance of oneness and why Satan does not want you as a couple to experience oneness in your marriage.

DISPLAYING THE GLORY OF GOD

What criteria do you use in defining a good marriage? The ways you measure “marital bliss” may include:

- How many years a couple has been married
- How kindly each spouse treats the other
- How much conflict they experience
- How much they share in common

When asked, “*What do you want from your marriage?*,” most couples respond by saying, “*We just want to be happy.*” But is happiness the standard we should use for identifying a good marriage? Not according to God. He doesn’t highlight the whole happiness thing in His Word. Instead, He emphasizes oneness.

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.” ~ Genesis 2:24

Why would God use oneness to define the most intimate relationship between a man and a woman? Why is oneness so important and necessary?

As we will see, God made marriage to reflect Himself. He is the Author and Designer of this most intimate relationship that a man and woman can experience.

Where did the idea of oneness come from?

After God created Adam and Eve, He shared His plan for this first couples’ relationship—that they would become “one flesh.” ~ *Genesis 2:24*

Later, Jesus himself attested to the institution of marriage and the design for oneness when He responded to the Pharisees’ question concerning divorce.

“Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.” ~ Matthew 19:4-6

We see in Jesus’ words that God made humans male and female for the reason of making them *one flesh*. The Great Creator formed Adam from the dust of the earth and breathed the breath of life into him. But Eve was formed when God took something from *within* Adam—one of his ribs—and fashioned the first woman. God then presented Eve to Adam, as if to say, “I made this woman from your flesh, and now you are to exhibit oneness in a new relationship as you come back together.”

Jesus said in essence, “What God has specially designed with great care, no one should change or separate.”

It's obvious that God's oneness design for marriage is vitally important. Oneness, at its core, is a reflection of Him. When He created the man and woman in *Genesis 1:26*, God said, “let us make man in *our* image, in *our* likeness.” Many theologians feel that when God says “in *our* image”, he is referring to the Godhead—the relationship between God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ), and God the Holy Spirit. Three distinct personalities, each with specific roles and responsibilities, but altogether *one*—three in one.

The oneness of the Trinity is the example for all relationships, especially marriage and the Body of Christ (believers in Jesus). God created man and woman in His image—in the image of the Trinity:

“Let us make man in our image” ~ Genesis 1:26

God has made human beings with the capacity to experience eternal life, relationship, love, truth, and oneness. This reflects the image of the Trinity.

The Father, Son and Holy Spirit know perfect fellowship, agreement, devotion, and communion with each other. They are committed to a deep and abiding relationship. There's no division or selfishness in their relationship. Oneness flows naturally from who God is.

It's difficult for us as humans to understand the intimacy, affection, and infinite love that are within the Godhead—each Person of the Trinity loving and each receiving love in return. And each member being in absolute agreement with the other.

Notice how Jesus expressed the depth of the love He has received from the Father.

“Father, I want those You have given me to be with Me where I am, and to see My glory, the glory You have given Me because You loved Me before the creation of the world.” ~ John 17:24

In John 14 we see the incredible oneness between God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. When Philip asked Jesus to show the disciples the Father, Jesus gave a response that reflects the intimacy of the Trinity.

Jesus answered: “Don't you know me, Philip, even I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me.” ~ John 14:9-11

The oneness between the Father and Son is so perfect that Jesus said in effect, “If you’ve seen me you have seen the Father, for we are one.” God shared His very nature with His human creation. The oneness He enjoys within the Godhead is the model for our marriage relationships.

Modeling Oneness

Oneness is about relating, for the Trinity is an example of perfect relationship. It deals with how we interact in all aspects of our marriage. How we move toward our spouse. How we share our needs, approach each other sexually, carry on a conversation, and share the depth of our soul.

Married partners should experience oneness in their communication, affection, sexual relationship, and fellowship with God. We have a deep longing to experience oneness in each area of our marriage. To not desire oneness in any area would be a departure from God’s Trinity model.

Experiencing “Trinity-like” oneness in marriage includes the joy of physical pleasure in sexual intimacy and the warmth of connectedness as husband and wife open their souls to each other and become vulnerable. It’s a very sacred thing.

When a couple engages in sexual intimacy they’re entering into a holy expression of the indwelling of the Godhead. They experience the act that can lead to the procreation of life—life that comes from God. So sexual intimacy is more than just reaching an orgasm, it’s intended to help us better understand and celebrate the oneness of the Trinity. It gives us a profound insight into God’s loving ways.

When we see sexual pleasure as a gift of experiencing oneness, it has an impact on how we approach each other sexually—the asking, the foreplay, and the way we treat our spouse when they don’t respond to our sexual advances.

Another example of Trinity-inspired oneness is a couple’s openness and vulnerability with each other, sharing freely with no fear. There is no self-protection needed as they give freely of themselves. They have no need to hide from each other or keep secrets. They are able to forgive and show mercy with no retaliation after they’ve been wounded by their spouse.

Oneness reflecting the Trinity recognizes that we live in a broken world where we hurt each other intentionally or unintentionally. It helps us display the character of the Godhead and pour out love unconditionally, showing patience, and offering forgiveness. We *can* extend these things to our spouse because we have received them from God.

Think about this: *Struggling with an imperfect spouse allows us to understand how God sees us and yet pursues us.* We can become more Christlike as we model God’s patience, mercy, love and forgiveness.

Many marriages could benefit from skill-training in communication, conflict resolution and problem solving. But the ultimate issue is not developing better skills in marriage, it's developing a deepening love relationship that imitates the Trinity.

The Enemy of Oneness

Satan is the archenemy of the Trinity and therefore an enemy of oneness. Anything that would reflect the Trinity he is out to destroy. Satan doesn't want us to be vulnerable and open with each other in our marital relationships. Every marriage is under attack from Satan because each marriage was designed to reflect the glory of God.

Satan's plan is very clever and can take many forms when he seeks to destroy our oneness. Here are some of things we do that allows him to wreak havoc in our relationships:

- Keeping so busy with work, home and children that we don't have time for each other.
- Sharpening our skills in marriage, but not taking the risk to truly share our soul. Focusing on better listening and communication skills that are a diversion from the real heart change that needs to take place.
- Neglecting our spouse as we only look to our own needs.
- Demanding that our needs be met.
- Holding on to anger and unforgiveness because of something our spouse did to us.
- Using our own resources, instead of trusting in God's.
- Allowing addictions to TV, shopping, overspending, alcohol, and the Internet to consume us.
- Giving up on trying to meet our spouse's needs because they aren't meeting ours.
- Having fantasies about people other than your spouse in which they meet your needs emotionally or physically.
- Thinking in terms of "his" and "hers" rather than ours.

Displaying the Glory of God

When we reflect the Trinity through the oneness of our marriage, we are displaying the glory of God. Put simply, *the goal of our marriage is to put God on display.*

"And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit." ~ 2 Corinthians 3:18

God's glory is a display of His presence, but, even more, it's a display of His personality—who He is. God's glory radiates his essence.

In *Exodus 40:34* we see the presence of God displayed. The cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.

Psalms 19:1 gives an example of God's glory revealed. The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the works of his hands.

Our marital oneness should model to others the magnificent God of heaven.

Before Jesus went to the cross, he prayed that all believers would be one, just as He and God the Father are one. The reason for his request was so that the world would believe in God—believe in Him.

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me.” ~ John 17:20-23

Jesus' plea was that we would be one as He and the Father are one. The way we exhibit oneness with our spouse is an outward statement to others that we know God and that we desire to display His glory.

When we treat each other with Trinity-like love, we shine like stars in the universe.

“Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life.” ~ Philippians 2:14-16

People are watching how we love, how we speak, and how we show value toward our spouse. Our marriages puts God's glory on display—they should be different than the world's. Children, parents, friends, and others are watching us. What are we showing and telling them about who God is?

When we are more concerned about having our needs met than about glorifying God, our marriages suffer. But couples don't seek counseling because they are concerned about not glorifying God, rather they go with these words on their lips: “My needs are not being met.”

We need to begin to change our focus. Our prayer as a couple should be,

“Glorify the Lord with me; let us exalt his name together” ~ Psalm 34:3

Key Questions for Unlocking Oneness in your Marriage

1. In what ways is my marriage displaying oneness?
2. In what ways is my marriage lacking the oneness I desire?
3. Why is Satan so committed to destroying marital oneness?
4. What lies from the evil one have I fallen for that have affected the oneness of my marriage?
5. In what area(s) of my relationship with my spouse is God's presence and personality displayed?
What areas do not reflect His glory?
6. Why am I often more concerned about how I'm being treated by my spouse versus how our relationship displays God's glory?