Before You Say “I Do”  
Matthew 19:1-12

Marriage is the joining of two individuals so that they become one and yet remain unique and interlocking personalities. It is not true that within this world there is certainly one, perfect, God-ordained person for each of us. But it is surely true that God can and often does lead individuals to marriage partners who will meet their needs and with whom they can blend their lives. Understanding the key elements of marriage will help prepare the would-be couples and protect the already-married couples.

1. **Know the Reasons for Marriage** (vv. 3-6)

- People marry because God created us male and female.
- People marry because God instituted marriage for companionship.
- People marry because God established marriage for mutual support.
- People marry because God ordained marriage for sexual expression.
- People marry because God declared in his Word that marriage is honorable.

2. **Know the Resolves of Marriage** (vv. 6, 8b, 9b)

- Unity is the testimony! – Do not break God’s heart.
- Lifetime is the destiny! – Do not break your spouse’s heart.
- Faithfulness is the key! – Do not break your own heart.

3. **Know the Risks of Marriage** (vv. 7-12)

- Disappointment is a probability! – You married the wrong person.
- Adultery is a possibility! – You married a sinful person.
- Divorce is a potentiality! – You are the wrong and sinful person.

Good marriages do not just happen. They are laboriously developed. If you are married, stay married and work out your troubles with your spouse. If you are single, stay single until you have fully understood marriage as God designed it.

Good choices do not always lead to good marriages, but careful selection of a mate does give a solid foundation on which to build a husband-wife relationship. Evaluate with these questions:

- Is my potential mate a believer?
- Does his or her life show evidence of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23)?
- Have my partner and I ever discussed our spiritual lives, struggles, and goals?
- Have we ever prayed together? If not, why not?
- Do we agree on a church, on our basic standard of living, on our views about right and wrong, and on our perspectives about a Christian home?