



elev8

life on another level

Student Workbook

YEAR 2

**Seasons and
Celebrations**
Marriage

Bible Readings

Genesis 2:24

Matthew 19:1-12

1 Corinthians 7

Ephesians 5

Luke 20:34-36



Learning Outcomes

At the end of this week you will be able to:

- Locate the theme of marriage in the Bible
- Express the theme or story in your own way
- Apply your learning from this issue to your own life and community

Notes from Bible Reading

Scripture A word or phrase that stood out to me:

Observation What is happening in this Bible reading?

Application Something that I learned about who I am or how I should live:

Prayer What I would like to say to God, ask of God, or what I think God is saying to me:

Key Question What does the Bible have to say about marriage?

Engage

Go around the group and share one thing for each heading that has happened since you last met:

- Plus – What has been good or enjoyable?
- Minus – What has been difficult or painful?
- Interesting – What has been unusual or thought provoking?

Talk about the last wedding you attended (or if you haven't attended a wedding yet, talk about a wedding you've seen in the movies or media). What did you enjoy about it?

Explore – Locate

- *What stood out to you in the Bible readings this week?*
- *What did you find meaningful or significant?*
- *Is there anything that you didn't understand or found confusing?*
- *Any questions or comments you may have?*

There are many issues in life that are more shaped by the culture we live in rather than the Bible, that is they think the Biblical idea and their culture's idea about that issue is almost exactly identical.

Our ideas of weddings and marriages are shaped almost exclusively from our culture, whereas the Bible radically goes against some of our cultural ideas!

This is a good reminder that God continually encourages us to challenge the ideas of our own culture (no matter how good that culture might be) to keep approaching more of God's own ideal culture (God's Kingdom).

For example, in Jesus' own culture, all marriages were arranged, that is who you were going to marry was decided by your parents from an early age. This still happens in different parts of the world by choice.

Ideas that can be found in these passages:

1. The New Testament challenges cultural expectations of marriages. Whereas the Old Testament seems to encourage people to "go forth and multiply" and even seem to endorse multiple wives (or partners) and divorce, the New Testament actually puts not marrying at all as an equal (and

sometimes more desirable) option (Matthew 19:11-12; 1 Corinthians 7:6-8; Luke 20:35).

2. Keeping a marriage going well can be difficult (Matt 19 : 8, 1 Corinthians 7:28), and requires personal effort and attitude adjustments by both parties (1 Corinthians 7:2-5; Ephesians 5:21-30). It is however a worthy goal, and people should not give up on a marriage when the going gets tough (1 Corinthians 7:10-11).
3. Marriage is seen as a worthy model (or analogy) of God's relationship with his people (Ephesians 5:32), one of extreme sacrifice and continually serving of the other, so that the other in turn can honour that.
It is not about power balance or imbalance but of love that puts the other always before your own selfish desires.
4. Who we are married to in this life isn't quite the same idea beyond this existence (Luke 20:34-36). This doesn't mean we treat marriage casually or look forward to a promiscuous afterlife. The Bible continues however to say we should honour marriages in this life.
5. God loves and values anyone who intends to and makes a commitment of lifelong devotion to another, even if they don't always believe in the same things (1 Cor 7:10-13, Matt 19:4-6).

Explore – Express

After a period of years, it seems (according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics) that over the last twenty years the number of marriages is increasing, the length of marriages increasing and the number of divorces is decreasing.

The overall percentage of people getting married however is still declining, and people are getting married at an increasing later age.

Create a 30 – 60 second TV ad on why people should think about getting married versus just living together in a de facto setup.

You might want to consider:

- De facto relationships are generally seen as equal to marriage in relation to the law and legal obligations and privileges.
- Possible issues like: life expectancy of those married and those not; stress levels; the tendency to be on guard in order to impress and attract others; spreading your attention between others; the value of continuous long term presence and commitment.

Some possible topics to discuss:

- In some countries like the Netherlands, marriage isn't something that is done by the church but by the government as it is seen as a political and legal arrangement first and foremost – about their legal standing in the community. People are then free to choose if they want the church to bless their marriage or relationship.
- Why do you think Australians are less likely to get married in general? Should we try to change this and how important is it to do so?
- How do you think someone would know from God if they should remain single like the writer Paul (1 Corinthians 7:7-9)? Should their ability (or lack of it) to control their lust be the main deciding factor?
- People often report being extremely nervous before getting married. Why?
- What do you think are the main causes for some marriages to break up or fall apart?
- Traditional Jewish culture (and many other cultures) has arranged marriages where potential partners are chosen by other older people. What advantages and disadvantages do you think that system has over individuals choosing their own partners?
- What qualities, characteristics or attributes would you look for in a potential marriage partner if you chose to marry?
- How would you organise an ideal wedding event in order to truly reflect the celebratory nature of it? What would you do like others you have seen, or what new aspects would you incorporate into it?
- Some people claim that if homosexuals were allowed to have commitment ceremonies (or marriages) it would threaten traditional families. How would people who already feel gay making long-term commitments to each other 'threaten the general heterosexual population'?

Explore – Integrate

- Understanding that God celebrates long term commitments of putting other people first and reflecting Jesus, who in our current lives can be place a greater priority on serving them?
- Look at the different ways other cultures of the world celebrate marriages and find out the meanings behind their symbols in terms of what that might say about the nature of marriage commitments.
- Knowing that marriages can be difficult commitments made by humans, how we practically support or encourage a married couple (e.g. your parents or another couple close to you) this week as a teenager? (e.g. babysit for a couple so they can have a 'date night', or help clean their place).
- Continue to prayerfully consider with God for him to separate clearly the cultural expectations of marriages and how you should view your relationships with others, so in don't just

Extend

Discuss with your group the challenges you are tackling. Use the time to ask for any help you might need, or to work together on any shared projects that you have.

Questions that may be helpful include:

- What challenges are you working on at the moment?
- Do you need any support or assistance?
- Are there any challenges that you have completed that we need to recognise and celebrate?
- Are there any new challenges that you want to work on?

Encourage

Tell another student in your group something you value or appreciate about them.

Share one thing you would like to pray for and pray for one another.

Pray and give thanks for the marriage of a couple you know and that their relationships will continue to blossom.

Pray for those around you to see themselves and their relationships through God's eyes rather through the lens filter of their culture.

Pray for reassurance from God not to feel pressured to be in a relationship and be confident and satisfied about singleness, or if you are in a relationship to live that out as God desired for you.