

7/15/07

Sermon Follow-up

Rich Lusk

This week's sermon focused on marriage as companionship. Let's explore some further features of this sub-purpose of marriage.

Hopefully by now the rationale behind two widely-known-but-often-rejected aspects of the Bible's teaching on sex and marriage have become clear.

1. *Sex outside of marriage is not only wrong but destructive.* As C. S. Lewis points out in *Mere Christianity*, Christians do not believe that sex outside of marriage is wrong because they are suspicious of all sexual activity: Just the opposite.

Modern people are always saying, "Sex is nothing to be ashamed of." They may mean two things. They may mean "There is nothing to be ashamed of in the fact that the human race reproduces itself in a certain way, nor in the fact that it gives pleasure." If they mean that, they are right. Christianity says the same. It is not the thing, nor the pleasure, that is the trouble. The old Christian teachers said that if man had never fallen, sexual pleasure, instead of being less than it is now, would actually have been greater. I know some muddle-headed Christians have talked as if Christianity thought that sex, or the body, or pleasure, were bad in themselves. But they were wrong. Christianity is almost the only one of the great religions which thoroughly approves of the body-which believes that matter is good, that God Himself once took on a human body, that some kind of body is going to be given to us even in Heaven and is going to be an essential part of our happiness, our beauty, and our energy. Christianity has glorified marriage more than any other religion: and nearly all the greatest love poetry in the world has been produced by Christians. If anyone says that sex, in itself, is bad, Christianity contradicts him at once.

Genesis 2 shows us that nakedness is good – but it belongs within the context of the marriage covenant and nowhere else. The covenant is the only place secure enough for that kind of vulnerability to take place in complete safety. Sex without covenantal commitment has disastrous consequences. When a person has sex outside of the marriage covenant, he is forced to detach himself from the act in some way. There cannot be total self-giving or receiving because there is no covenant holding the two together. Sex is reduced from a union of whole beings to a union of mere bodies; from a meshing of complete persons to a mere joining of parts. But of course, this never works. Physical oneness is inescapably intertwined with holistic oneness. Sex outside of marriage is a contradictory act –

you are becoming one with someone with whom you are *not* one! The act itself is a lie. Moreover, the more of yourself you give away to someone who is *not* your spouse, the less you have to give to that person who *is* your spouse, to communicate your exclusive and unique commitment to that person. The bonds of trust that you are capable of forming and maintaining within marriage are severely weakened. The companionship aspect of marriage is destabilized.

Frederica Mathewes-Green points out the truth of the old cliché: “Girls give sex in order to get love; boys give love in order to get sex. When the sexual revolution flooded the market with ‘free sex,’ its trading equivalency in square units of love was radically depreciated.” In other words, “free love” is actually “cheap love.” The breakdown of the biblical sex ethic in our culture has cheapened both sex and love, and cheats both men and women out of what they really want in their heart of hearts. “Free love” isn’t free at all; indeed, it is incredibly costly. It is subversive of true companionship and love in marriage. Again, Mathewes-Green points out some of the costs:

As Josh McDowell wisely asks teens, if you’re doing it because it feels good, how long does it have to feel good? Fifteen minutes? The rest of the day? Does it have to feel good when you find out you have herpes? What about AIDS? When your lover tires of you and spreads gossip about your body, or your adequacy in bed? What about when you find out you started a baby? Or when your parents find out? When you walk into the abortion clinic? When you’re a school dropout, raising a child as a single parent? How good does it have to feel now, to make up for how bad it’ll feel then?

Similar questions apply to adults as well. Will it feel good to be alone at the end of your life because you always played around and never made a commitment? When you’re middle-aged and saggy and can’t attract lovers any more? Will it feel good when all the classmates at your 30th high school reunion are showing pictures of their grandchildren, and you’re showing a picture of your dog? Will it feel good when you divorce? When you get to see the kids only on weekends? What about when your lover skips off to enjoy “free sex” with someone else, and you left behind, a loser nobody loves? Those are the rules of the game, and anyone who plays can lose everything.

And that doesn’t even begin to touch on the Spiritual ramifications. Think about the sex/marriage relationship in terms of typology. What if a person said to Jesus, “Jesus, I want the pleasures you can provide. I want to take from you what I desire. But I do not want a covenant with you. I do not want to commit myself to you completely. I still want to be able to make my own decisions and go my

own way. I want to be able to jump in and out of our relationship as I please.” Obviously, Jesus would not give himself or his blessings to such a person! Such a person cannot be part of the bride of Christ. Such a person simply wants to use Jesus to get his benefits without actually having to love and serve him in a wholehearted, steadfast way. And yet, at a typological level, this is exactly what one person says to another when he seeks to take sex outside of the marriage covenant. It is preaching a lie.

So the biblical rule – no sex without a covenant – makes good sense, practically, morally, theologically, Spiritually, etc.

2. *It is wrong for a Christian to marry a non-Christian.* Paul tells Christians they should not be unequally yoked and should only marry “in the Lord” (1 Cor. 6-7; 2 Cor. 6). Marriage is a deep form of friendship sustained, at least in part, by common goals and aspirations. In other words, you should only marry someone with whom you can have a *shared life mission*. But a Christian and non-Christian simply cannot share a life mission. They are headed in opposite directions, serving antithetical lords. Further, after the initial thrill of physical attraction wears off somewhat (as it inevitably does in any marriage, either through familiarity or aging), the key to sustaining attraction to one another begins to move beyond the physical. As a couple matures, attraction becomes increasingly based on mutual understanding. *To understand* and *to be understood* becomes the heart of mature romance. But obviously a non-Christian cannot “understand” a Christian in any deep sense. So the relationship can never be as satisfying or deep as God intended. Because marriage is a total oneness of persons, it is vital that that other person share your Spiritual orientation. It is vital that the two of you have a shared life vision.

This takes us back to last week’s sermon: *marriage is about mission*. Marriage (like singleness) is subordinated to the kingdom of God. Leland Ryken explains, using the example of the Puritans (the English/American Calvinists of the 17th and 18th centuries):

The Puritans never doubted that married love should be subordinate to the love of God, though they viewed the two as complementary rather than opposed...What the Puritans insisted on, here as elsewhere, was that an activity carry a purpose higher than itself. John Cotton warned against the error of aiming “at no higher end than marriage itself” and encouraged people to look upon spouses “not for their own ends, but to be better fitted for God’s service and bring them nearer to God.”

None of this is to say that a spouse who is converted after marrying a non-Christian is doomed. Paul (1 Cor. 7) and Peter (1 Pt. 3) both deal with such

situations in a hopeful way. But it is to say that Christians should not even begin to contemplate marriage to someone who is not “in the Lord.” Indeed, even finding a fellow Christian might not be quite enough; it is all the better if that person shares *specific* aspects of your life mission and worldview. Bare faith may not be sufficient to really share in your life vision and mission; character, convictions, and maturity matter as well. But this is a matter of prudence, not law.

The companionship aspect of marriage, like every other aspect, is best understood in terms of typology. Marriage is designed to picture Christ and the church. Christ makes his bride his companion. Jesus called his disciples his friends. Christ considers himself incomplete apart from his people. In commenting on Eph. 1:23, John Calvin wrote: “This is the highest honor of the church, that until He is united to us, the Son of God reckons himself in some measure imperfect. What consolation is it for us to learn that, not until we are along with him, does he possess all his parts, or wish to be regarded as complete! Hence, in 1 Corinthians, when the apostle discusses largely the metaphor of a human body, he includes under the single name of Christ the whole church.”

It is truly amazing to think that Christ regards himself as missing something – he regards himself as Adam did before he was given his bride, as *alone* and *incomplete* – until he is joined to the church. Strangely, fellowship with the Father and Spirit are not enough to satisfy Jesus; in some way, he must have fellowship with his people if he is to be truly whole.

This typology also explains why marriage is under such attack in our day. Beneath all our culture’s attacks on the institution of marriage (e.g., homosexual partnerships, easy divorce laws, the normalizing of pre-marital sex, etc.) is an attack on the gospel. Our culture hates marriage because it hates Christ and the church. Our culture seeks to subvert and destroy marital companionship because it reminds us and points us to Christ’s companionship with the church. When the institution of marriage is in shambles, it becomes more difficult to preach the gospel.

In discussing Genesis 2, I pointed out that “bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” is a way of saying, “Where I am weak, she is strong, and where she is weak, I am strong.” In this way, we see that a husband and wife each supply what the other lacks.

In honor of our pastoral intern, Jeremy Sexton, I provide the following illustration. This is taken from the original *Rocky* movie where Rocky (Sly Stallone) has a conversation with his trainer Paulie, about his woman, Adrian.

PAULIE: Ya really like her?

ROCKY: Sure I like her.

PAULIE: (nervous laughter) What's the attraction? I don't see it?

ROCKY: I dunno -- she fills gaps.

PAULIE: What gaps?

ROCKY: (shrugs) She got gaps. I got gaps -- together we fill the gaps.

Ok, so it's only a Rocky movie and it's kind of cheesy. Nevertheless, that line "together we fill gaps" is *exactly* what Genesis 2:23 is all about. We all have gaps, but in marriage, we fill in one another's gaps.

Genesis 2 shows us that the pattern of marital life is identical to that of the Christian life: death and resurrection. God takes Adam apart and puts him back together better than before. God makes Adam two by tearing out his side, but then makes one with his side again in joining him to his wife as one flesh. Marriage is designed to progress from glory to ever greater glory – but this can only happen through continual death to self on the part of each spouse. Each time we die, God resurrects something better than we had before.

As I briefly mentioned in the sermon, Adam's sleep and awakening (or "death and resurrection" pattern) is also typological. In John 19, as Jesus enters "death sleep" on the cross, his side is torn open and water and blood flow. The water and blood form the bride, the church. In fact there is all kinds of marital imagery at work in John 19-21. (I brought out a little bit of it in my Easter sermons this year on John 20-21.)

In the sermon I talked about self-image as a construct imposed upon us by others. We think of ourselves primarily in terms of *what we think others think of us*. This has a wider application than marriage, but it is especially true within the marriage relationship. As I said, marriage gives your spouse a unique power of your view of yourself. And in marriage, you have a unique power over your spouse in the same way. Because of the "nakedness," or vulnerability, in

marriage, spouses can make or break one another by how they build one another up or destroy each other.

Ultimately, of course, our self image must derive from God's "opinion" of us. The biblical word for this is "imputation." God *imputes* us as righteous by faith. He thinks of us and regards us as righteous – in Christ, and by faith. See Romans 4 for more.

If God says you are righteous, beautiful, beloved, etc., *then you are*, and to argue with God's assessment of you is simply unbelief. You are accusing God of lying! You are suggesting that someone else's word about you is more determinative and authoritative than God's word. So our self-image has to start with what God says about us in baptism and justification, where he declares us to be his children and accepts us as righteous. God treats us AS IF we were already the people he promises to make us in the end.

But under that, our spouse's view of us shapes us in a tremendously powerful way. Obviously this power can be used for good or evil, to build up or destroy your spouse. Let me focus on how to transform your spouse for the better. The most effective way to make your spouse into the person you desire him/her to be is to treat him/her AS IF he/she already were that person. *This means husbands need to love even disrespectful wives, and wives need to respect even unloving husbands.* We need to see the other's "gospel potential" (that is, who God has destined them to become by his grace) and treat them accordingly, "loving them into their futures," as I've been saying. You could call this the "golden rule" of marriage: *the most effective way to get what you desire from your spouse is to give him/her what he/she desires.* Live towards your spouse in light of who God promises to make them and you will speed them on their way to that destination. Live towards your spouse in a way that fulfills his/her deepest desires and needs, and you will soon find your own needs and desires being met to a much greater degree.

A particularly powerful illustration of this is found in Shakespeare's play *The Taming of the Shrew*. There's no need to summarize the whole play, but the key aspect of the plot is this: Kate is a shrewish woman. No one wants to marry her. She is argumentative, cruel, bombastic, obnoxious, short tempered, arrogant, etc. But finally a man named Petruchio decides he will court her. He assumes a position of gracious lordship over her. He treats her AS IF she was already gentle, beautiful, kind, submissive, etc. And guess what? Over the course of the play, she becomes all those things. His love transforms her, until she is altogether lovely! Indeed, at the play's end, her sweet submissiveness even wins her husband a second dowry! The play closes with this interchange between Kate, the transformed shrew, and her husband:

PETRUCHIO

Katharina, I charge thee, tell these headstrong women
What duty they do owe their lords and husbands.

Widow

Come, come, you're mocking: we will have no telling.

PETRUCHIO

Come on, I say; and first begin with her.

Widow

She shall not.

PETRUCHIO

I say she shall: and first begin with her.

KATHARINA

Fie, fie! unknit that threatening unkind brow,
And dart not scornful glances from those eyes,
To wound thy lord, thy king, thy governor:
It blots thy beauty as frosts do bite the meads,
Confounds thy fame as whirlwinds shake fair buds,
And in no sense is meet or amiable.
A woman moved is like a fountain troubled,
Muddy, ill-seeming, thick, bereft of beauty;
And while it is so, none so dry or thirsty
Will deign to sip or touch one drop of it.
Thy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper,
Thy head, thy sovereign; one that cares for thee,
And for thy maintenance commits his body
To painful labour both by sea and land,
To watch the night in storms, the day in cold,
Whilst thou liest warm at home, secure and safe;
And craves no other tribute at thy hands
But love, fair looks and true obedience;
Too little payment for so great a debt.
Such duty as the subject owes the prince
Even such a woman oweth to her husband;
And when she is froward, peevish, sullen, sour,
And not obedient to his honest will,
What is she but a foul contending rebel
And graceless traitor to her loving lord?
I am ashamed that women are so simple
To offer war where they should kneel for peace;
Or seek for rule, supremacy and sway,
When they are bound to serve, love and obey.

Why are our bodies soft and weak and smooth,
Unapt to toil and trouble in the world,
But that our soft conditions and our hearts
Should well agree with our external parts?
Come, come, you froward and unable worms!
My mind hath been as big as one of yours,
My heart as great, my reason haply more,
To bandy word for word and frown for frown;
But now I see our lances are but straws,
Our strength as weak, our weakness past compare,
That seeming to be most which we indeed least are.
Then vail your stomachs, for it is no boot,
And place your hands below your husband's foot:
In token of which duty, if he please,
My hand is ready; may it do him ease.

PETRUCHIO

Why, there's a wench! Come on, and kiss me, Kate....
Come, Kate, we'll to bed.
We three are married, but you two are sped....

HORTENSIO

Now, go thy ways; thou hast tamed a curst shrew.

LUCENTIO

'Tis a wonder, by your leave, she will be tamed so.

Petruchio's love makes Kate into the perfect, idealized wife, and they live happily ever after. It's never so simple in real life, of course, but the principle here is entirely biblical. Wives, if your husband is not that respectable, respect him anyway. *Respect bestows respectability*. Husbands, if your wife is not all that loveable, love her anyway. *Love bestows loveliness*.

Now for a caveat: While this is obviously a two-way street, there is a kind of asymmetry. The husband is the head and has powers and responsibilities the wife does not. The husband is responsible for the overall state of the household the way a captain is responsible for his ship. He has a much greater ability to shape the overall condition of the marriage.

Think of it this way, using my marriage as an illustration:

Jenny is responsible for her life before God, including how she lives as a wife and mother.

Rich is responsible for his life before God, including how he lives as a husband and father.

But Rich is also responsible for *the Lusk family*. The Lusk family is a covenantal unit, and the husband is the captain of that entity. He is not only a private person, but a public person. As head, he is spokesman for the family. The buck stops with him. He embodies his family and acts on behalf of his family as its covenantal representative. He is responsible to guide and direct the family as a whole. And when there are problems in the family, they are *his* problems, whether he brought them on or not. He may not be *guilty* of all the sin committed within his household, but he is *responsible* for it. (This guilt/responsibility distinction is vital not only to marriage but to the gospel: Jesus is not personally guilty of our sin, but as our covenantal head and representative, he made himself responsible for it.)

I'll be talking about how headship works more later on, but it is fitting to drop this much in here. Marriage is all about friendship and companionship, but that does not make the two marital partners interchangeable. There is an *asymmetrical mutuality* in marriage. The husband and wife are equal, but equality is not equivalence. In a lot of friendships, the two friends are largely interchangeable. But not here. There is an irreducibility to gender roles in marriage. Spouses are not roommates who happen to sleep together. They are joined into a new covenantal organism, with a head and a body. Marriage is a structured, covenantal relationship. The husband is the head and leader of that relationship. This means a husband is responsible not only for performing his own role, but also for the way in which his wife performs her role.

Cultivating strong companionship within marriage is hard work, from beginning to end. Lewis explains in *Mere Christianity*, as he contrasts "love" with "being in love":

The idea that "being in love" is the only reason for remaining married really leaves no room for marriage as a contract or promise at all. If love is the whole thing, then the promise can add nothing; and if it adds nothing, then it should not be made. The curious thing is that lovers themselves, while they remain really in love, know this better than those who talk about love. As Chesterton pointed out, those who are in love have a natural inclination to bind themselves by promises. Love songs all over the world are full of vows of eternal constancy. The Christian law is not forcing upon the passion of love something which is foreign to that passion's own nature: it is demanding that lovers should take seriously something which their passion of itself impels them to do.

And, of course, the promise, made when I am in love and because I am in love, to be true to the beloved as long as I live, commits one to being true even if I cease to be in love. A promise must be about things that I can

do, about actions: no one can promise to go on feeling in a certain way. He might as well promise never to have a headache or always to feel hungry. But what, it may be asked, is the use of keeping two people together if they are no longer in love? There are several sound, social reasons; to provide a home for their children, to protect the woman (who has probably sacrificed or damaged her own career by getting married) from being dropped whenever the man is tired of her. But there is also another reason of which I am very sure, though I find it a little hard to explain.

It is hard because so many people cannot be brought to realise that when B is better than C, A may be even better than B. They like thinking in terms of good and bad, not of good, better, and best, or bad, worse and worst. They want to know whether you think patriotism a good thing: if you reply that it is, of course, far better than individual selfishness, but that it is inferior to universal charity and should always give way to universal charity when the two conflict, they think you are being evasive. They ask what you think of dueling. If you reply that it is far better to forgive a man than to fight a duel with him, but that even a duel might be better than a lifelong enmity which expresses itself in secret efforts to "do the man down," they go away complaining that you would not give them a straight answer. I hope no one will make this mistake about what I am now going to say.

What we call "being in love" is a glorious state, and, in several ways, good for us. It helps to make us generous and courageous, it opens our eyes not only to the beauty of the beloved but to all beauty, and it subordinates (especially at first) our merely animal sexuality; in that sense, love is the great conqueror of lust. No one in his senses would deny that being in love is far better than either common sensuality or cold self-centredness. But, as I said before, "the most dangerous thing you can do is to take any one impulse of our own nature and set it up as the thing you ought to follow at all costs." Being in love is a good thing, but it is not the best thing. There are many things below it, but there are also things above it. You cannot make it the basis of a whole life. It is a noble feeling, but it is still a feeling. Now no feeling can be relied on to last in its full intensity, or even to last at all. Knowledge can last, principles can last, habits can last; but feelings come and go. And in fact, whatever people say, the state called "being in love" usually does not last. If the old fairytale ending "They lived happily ever after" is taken to mean "They felt for the next fifty years exactly as they felt the day before they were married," then it says what probably never was nor ever could be true, and would be highly undesirable if it were. Who could bear to live in that excitement for even five years? What would become of your work, your appetite, your sleep, your friendships? But, of course, ceasing to be

"in love" need not mean ceasing to love. Love in this second sense—love as distinct from "being in love" is not merely a feeling. It is a deep unity, maintained by the will and deliberately strengthened by habit; reinforced by (in Christian marriages) the grace which both parents ask, and receive, from God. They can have this love for each other even at those moments when they do not like each other; as you love yourself even when you do not like yourself. They can retain this love even when each would easily, if they allowed themselves, be "in love" with someone else. "Being in love" first moved them to promise fidelity: this quieter love enables them to keep the promise. It is on this love that the engine of marriage is run: being in love was the explosion that started it.

If you disagree with me, of course, you will say, "He knows nothing about it, he is not married." You may quite possibly be right. But before you say that, make quite sure that you are judging me by what you really know from your own experience and from watching the lives of your friends, and not by ideas you have derived from novels and films. This is not so easy to do as people think. Our experience is coloured through and through by books and plays and the cinema, and it takes patience and skill to disentangle the things we have really learned from life for ourselves.

People get from books the idea that if you have married the right person you may expect to go on "being in love" for ever. As a result, when they find they are not, they think this proves they have made a mistake and are entitled to a change—not realising that, when they have changed, the glamour will presently go out of the new love just as it went out of the old one. In this department of life, as in every other, thrills come at the beginning and do not last. The sort of thrill a boy has at the first idea of flying will not go on when he has joined the R.A.F. and is really learning to fly. The thrill you feel on first seeing some delightful place dies away when you really go to live there. Does this mean it would be better not to learn to fly and not to live in the beautiful place? By no means. In both cases, if you go through with it, the dying away of the first thrill will be compensated for by a quieter and more lasting kind of interest. What is more (and I can hardly find words to tell you how important I think this), it is just the people who are ready to submit to the loss of the thrill and settle down to the sober interest, who are then most likely to meet new thrills in some quite different direction. The man who has learned to fly and becomes a good pilot will suddenly discover music; the man who has settled down to live in the beauty spot will discover gardening.

This is, I think, one little part of what Christ meant by saying that a thing will not really live unless it first dies. It is simply no good trying to keep any thrill: that is the very worst thing you can do. Let the thrill

go-let it die away-go on through that period of death into the quieter interest and happiness that follow -and you will find you are living in a world of new thrills all the time. But if you decide to make thrills your regular diet and try to prolong them artificially, they will all get weaker and weaker, and fewer and fewer, and you will be a bored, disillusioned old man for the rest of your life. It is because so few people understand this that you find many middle-aged men and women maundering about their lost youth, at the very age when new horizons ought to be appearing and new doors opening all round them. It is much better fun to learn to swim than to go on endlessly (and hopelessly) trying to get back the feeling you had when you first went paddling as a small boy.

Another notion we get from novels and plays is that "falling in love" is something quite irresistible; something that just happens to one, like measles. And because they believe this, some married people throw up the sponge and give in when they find themselves attracted by a new acquaintance. But I am inclined to think that these irresistible passions are much rarer in real life than in books, at any rate when one is grown up. When we meet someone beautiful and clever and sympathetic, of course we ought, in one sense, to admire and love these good qualities. But is it not very largely in our own choice whether this love shall, or shall not, turn into what we call "being in love"? No doubt, if our minds are full of novels and plays and sentimental songs, and our bodies full of alcohol, we shall turn any love we feel into that kind of love: just as if you have a rut in your path all the rainwater will run into that rut, and if you wear blue spectacles everything you see will turn blue. But that will be our own fault.

Moving from "being in love" to "loving" is a transition that takes place in every marital relationship. Honeymoon intensity cannot be maintained forever – not should it be. As I've noted before every marriage will pass through various seasons, various ups and downs, etc. Lewis is exactly right that the promise of love, not the feeling of "being in love," is what sustains the relationship and brings it to full maturity.

Marital companionship should never be boring. You will spend the rest of your life getting to know the person you have married. And just when you think you have your spouse "figured out" he or she will change again! Marriage is a never ending exploration of the other person. It is a dynamic, not static, relationship.

Persons are made in the image of God and are therefore nearly infinite in complexity and depth. After 60 years of marriage (if they both live long enough!) a couple should still be getting to know each other, still making new discoveries.

You never reach the end in your search into another person's soul. There are always further layers to peel back, new conversations to have, new experiences to share together, further struggles to undertake with one another, etc.

My guess is that most couples who are torn apart from infidelity often fell away from one another because they stopped seeking to know one another more deeply. They got tired of the hard work of digging into one another's lives, and so one spouse turned to someone else who seemed (on the surface, at least) to be more interesting.

If this is so, it probably means that many cases of adultery are really due to sloth as much as lust. One spouse grew tired of the pursuit of the other and looked for something easier. But surely there is hardly anything more rewarding in life than continuing to dig into the soul of another person – even if it can be very difficult work at times!

We owe our mature understanding of the companionate marriage largely to the Puritans (the English/American Calvinists of the 17th and 18th centuries). In the medieval period, it was quite common for Christian theologians and ethicists to view male-male friendship as the highest form of companionship. The Puritans made companionship an even higher priority in marriage than procreation, and in so doing, opened the door to a far more glorious understanding of marriage. The Puritans revolutionized marriage by making it a covenanted sexual friendship, as opposed to a mere business/familial arrangement, as had been widespread in the medieval period. They viewed marriage as the ultimate and most complete form of friendship. For example, one Puritan theologian wrote:

There is no society more near, more entire, more needful, more kindly, more delightful, more comfortable, more constant, more continual, than the society of man and wife, the main root, source, and original of all other societies.

Another Puritan wrote that marriage is “one of the greatest outward blessings that in this world man enjoyeth.” Still another wrote that in marriage, “thou not only unitest unto thyself a friend and comfort for society, but also a companion for pleasure.”

(These quotations come from Leland Ryken's *Worldly Saints*.)

Additional resources:

Frederica Mathewes-Green's *Selected Writings, Vol. 1: Gender*. Mathewes-Green may be the closest thing we have to a contemporary Chesterton. Nevermind that she's an Eastern Orthodox woman, whereas he was a Roman Catholic man. Like Chesterton, she provides a razor sharp analysis of the follies and foolishness of our culture. In this collection of very readable essays, she gives insight after insight into feminism, abortion, sex, gender roles, etc.

Leland Ryken's *Wordly Saints* has a chapter on marriage that summarizes the biblical view, as seen through the eyes of the Puritans. It is quite good.

I guess it's time to mention my own essay "Women, Ministry, and Liturgy." See <http://www.trinity-pres.net/essays/women-ministry-liturgy.pdf>. Hopefully, this paper will be turned into a book someday (tentatively entitled *Different Roles, Different Souls*). It's been in the works for quite some time!