

# Lesson 6 | January 8, 2023

## Keep Marriage Sacred

**Study Text:** Genesis 2:18–24; Matthew 5:27–30; 19:1–9; 1 Corinthians 6:18 through 7:5; Ephesians 5:21–33

**Central Truth:** Marriage is defined in Scripture as a lifelong, committed relationship between a man and a woman.

### **Key Verse: Genesis 2:24**

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh (KJV).

This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one (NLT).

### **Learning Objectives**

- Students will acknowledge the scriptural teaching about marriage as the standard.
- Students will appreciate how God designed marriage to meet the human need for companionship and intimacy.
- Students will commit to purity and faithfulness before and in marriage.

## **Introducing the Study**

**Say:** Building strong families begins with building strong marriages marked by faithfulness. Jesus dealt with the importance of faithfulness in marriage, taking it even further than the actual act of adultery (see Matthew 5:28). When couples love and respect one another and serve God together, they should protect each other from the devastation that comes from unfaithfulness.

### **Opening Activity—Title**

*Ask.* Many states and countries have laws against adultery. What do you think some of the punishments prescribed by these laws might be? (Some students may want to quickly look up some of the laws on their smart phones.) In Idaho, adultery may result in a fine of up to \$1,000 and up to three years in jail.<sup>1</sup> In Minnesota, the punishment may be up to one year in prison and up to a \$3,000 fine.<sup>2</sup> Laws in other states vary widely.

**Oklahoma: It's a crime not only for the married person but also for the other person involved, even if that person is not married. It is adultery and it is a felony under Oklahoma law. In fact, it has a potential of up to five years imprisonment and/or a fine of up to \$500.** Jul 5, 2021

**Imagine the population of our prisons if all were prosecuted.**

**Say:** While these laws are seldom enforced, it is even more troubling to see the effects of marital unfaithfulness on families and their spiritual well-being. God established marriage so a man and a woman could have companionship, intimacy, and children. By practicing mutual love and respect for one another, couples can maintain the sacredness and purity of their marriage. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

<sup>1</sup>The official website of the Idaho Legislature. "Title 18: Crimes and Punishment; Chapter 66: Sex Crimes. 18-6601. Adultery," <https://legislature.idaho.gov/statutesrules/idstat/title18/t18ch66/sect18-6601/>, accessed July 26, 2021.

<sup>2</sup>Minnesota Legislature. "2020 Minnesota Statutes; 609.36 ADULTERY," <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/609.36>, accessed July 26, 2021.

God's Word clearly defines marriage and gives instructions on how it should be lived out. Hebrews 13:4 says, "Give honor to marriage, and remain faithful to one another in marriage. God will surely judge people who are immoral and those who commit adultery" (NLT).

**God doesn't want us to try, he wants us to yield to the Holy Spirit.**

**Bob Hoekstra says, "The law of God is not suggesting that we "be better." It is demanding that we "be holy," as holy as God. The law is not implying that we "be nicer." It is requiring that we "be loving," as loving as Christ. The law is not proposing that we "try harder." It is insisting that we "be perfect," as perfect as our Father in heaven.**

**The law of God is not asking us to improve ourselves or to be better than the next person. Many times this inaccurate statement is heard: "Just do the best that you can; what more could God require?" Well, God is demanding far beyond our human best. "Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law?" (Galatians 4:21). God's law is demanding that lives "be holy," "be loving," and "be perfect." Moreover, He Himself is the standard of this holiness, love, and perfection."**

## **Part 1—Keep Marriage Sacred**

### **God Established Marriage**

Genesis 2:18–24

**[Gen 2:18-24 KJV] 18 And the LORD God said, [It is] not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. 19 And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and**

every fowl of the air; and brought [them] unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that [was] the name thereof. 20 And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. 21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; 22 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. 23 And Adam said, This [is] now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. 24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

**Say:** God created humans to be both social and spiritual creatures, beings who need interaction with others and with Him. While animals can make fine companions, they are not capable of filling the needs a relationship with another person can. The woman Eve was formed from Adam's rib, uniquely created to be the companion he needed. By this act, God established marriage as a sacred union in which husband and wife become one flesh. This relationship is to supersede all other relationships in our lives, even that of a parent and a child. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Since humans are created in God's image, it should not be surprising that people need companionship. As many Christian scholars point out, the expression "let us" in Genesis 1:26 is an early reference to the doctrine of the Trinity. The community and companionship of the triune God is reflected in the need for community and companionship in humans who are created in God's image.

The animals God created failed to fully meet Adam's need for companionship—to be the helper he needed (2:18). The word "helper" (NLT) here is not a demeaning term; in fact, it is also used to describe God as our Helper (Psalms 33:20; 70:5; 115:9). God formed a being who was similar to Adam to be his companion—Eve (Genesis 2:21–22). She would be with him to support and assist him.

[Psa 33:20 KJV] 20 Our soul waiteth for the LORD: he [is] our help and our shield.

[Psa 70:5 NLT] 5 But as for me, I am poor and needy; please hurry to my aid, O God. You are my helper and my savior; O LORD, do not delay.

[Psa 115:9 NLT] 9 O Israel, trust the LORD! He is your helper and your shield.

Eve being formed from one of Adam's ribs rather than from the ground as Adam had been formed points to the unity of the human race. It also reveals the intimacy intended

between men and women in marriage. **Adam and Eve were to walk side by side through life, supporting one another with the unique qualities and strengths God created them with.**

### ***Discuss***

? What makes marriage sacred?

? How can a couple promote “oneness” in their marriage?

## **Lifelong Commitment**

Matthew 19:1–9; Ephesians 5:31–33

**[Mat 19:1-9 KJV] 1 And it came to pass, [that] when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judaea beyond Jordan; 2 And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there. 3 The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? 4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made [them] at the beginning made them male and female, 5 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? 6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. 7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? 8 He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. 9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except [it be] for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.**

**[Eph 5:31-33 KJV] 31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. 32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife [see] that she reverence [her] husband.**

**Say:** God instituted marriage before the Fall. What He intended to be a loving, supportive, and fulfilling relationship was included in the destruction sin brought into the

world. Sin still disrupts relationships, including marriages, which too often end in divorce. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

**Jesus was challenged on the issue of marriage and divorce by the Pharisees while He was ministering in the region of Judea (Matthew 19:1–3). He directed their attention to the Scriptures, specifically to the account in Genesis of how God created the first woman and performed the first wedding to join the man and woman together as one. Jesus pointed out that God intended the marriage relationship to last for life (verses 4–6). A provision for divorce was included in the Law, but only as a concession to the hardness of heart caused by sin.**

**At the time Jesus was being questioned, two main schools of thought dominated the debate on the topic of marriage and divorce. One group held that the only grounds for divorce was infidelity. The other group held more of a “no-fault” divorce view (“for just any reason,” verse 3, NLT). The Pharisees hoped Jesus would respond in a way that would cause Him to lose the support of the group His answer didn’t agree with.**

**Jesus stressed that God’s intention was for marriage to be a lifelong commitment. As a man and a woman left their families, the relationship they entered into through marriage formed a new family (Ephesians 5:31–33; see also Genesis 2:24). In society, marriage has both a civil and a moral component. The civil component addresses legal matters and social interactions. The moral component is to reflect the sacred nature of marriage that is expressed in fidelity to one’s spouse.**

**Christians are not exempt from broken marriages. Yet even in cases of infidelity, divorce is not commanded. God’s desire is to redeem people from their sins and restore what sin has broken. As Christians interact with those who are going through marital problems or dealing with the aftermath of a divorce, compassion and mercy must guide them rather than condemnation and judgment. Thankfully, God’s grace is greater than the brokenness and pain that results from the fallenness of human beings.**

#### **Resource Packet Item 1: Strengthening Your Marriage**

Distribute the work sheet “Strengthening Your Marriage.” Suggest that couples take the sheet home, fill it out individually, and discuss it together.

#### ***Discuss***

? How can you minister to those who have gone through a divorce?

? Why is fidelity vital to a healthy marriage?

## **Part 2—Remain Pure in Marriage Honor God with Your Body**

1 Corinthians 6:18 through 7:5

**[1Co 6:18-20 KJV] 18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. 19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost [which is] in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.**

**[1Co 7:1-5 KJV] 1 Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: [It is] good for a man not to touch a woman. 2 Nevertheless, [to avoid] fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. 3 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. 4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. 5 Defraud ye not one the other, except [it be] with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.**

**Say:** Remaining pure in marriage begins before marriage. This is an important point, given the permissiveness of today's society regarding premarital sex and cohabiting. God created humans as sexual beings and defines in the Scriptures how sexuality is to be expressed, which is between a man and a woman who are married to one another. Sexual relations of any type outside of marriage are sin. The Church must not yield to the world on this point. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

**Christians are to conduct themselves so their behavior brings honor to God, for they belong to Him wholly—spirit, soul, and body. God intended for us to meet our sexual needs through intimacy with our spouse. Practicing self-control in this area of life honors God and enriches the marriage relationship.**

**Self-control - Michael Youssef says, self-control is not possible without the help of the Spirit of God. He says three things are important to know. Self-control is not self-mastery. At its best self-mastery is still out of control before God. Self-control is not self-improvement. My old nature wants me to run wild. My new nature wants to glorify God. Both do not work together. Self-improve says pick and improvement area do it a little bit at a time. Biblical self-control requires the Holy Spirit to take control. Self-control is not self-will. Three, self-control**

**must have a focus. What is your goal as a Christian? Only the Holy Spirit of God can help me keep my focus by taking over my spirit.**

Paul confronted the misconceptions believers in Corinth had regarding their sexuality (verse 19). They failed to see the spiritual component in sexual activity, thinking it only involved the physical body. **What Christians do with their bodies either honors or dishonors God, for the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (verse 20).**

Sexual sin not only dishonors God, it can do great harm to one's body and relationships. Sexually transmitted diseases can cause infertility and other health problems, and can even result in death. Infidelity destroys trust and intimacy, weakening the foundation of the marriage relationship. **To this end, Paul commanded them to "run from sexual sin" (1 Corinthians 6:18, NLT).**

God provided for the healthy expression of sexuality through marriage (7:2–5). While God enables (and even calls) some people to remain single, most people do not have the gift of celibacy, so they should marry. Within the marriage relationship, the sexual needs of both the husband and the wife can be met. Sexual intimacy should strengthen the marriage relationship emotionally and spiritually.

### ***Discuss***

? How can Christians battle the pressure to adopt a worldly viewpoint concerning sexuality?

? How can parents help children develop a biblical view of sexuality?

## **Safeguard Your Heart**

Matthew 5:27–30

**[Mat 5:27-30 KJV] 27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: 28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. 29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast [it] from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not [that] thy whole body should be cast into hell. 30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast [it] from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not [that] thy whole body should be cast into hell.**

**Say:** Perhaps you have walked through a store with a child and told him or her, “Look, but don’t touch.” Rare is the child who follows that instruction. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus challenged His audience beyond that simple parental instruction. He revealed that keeping the letter of the Law was not enough. He wanted people to realize God was concerned about the condition of their hearts. In the case of the prohibition against adultery, lust in the heart leads to the physical act of adultery. Looking leads to touching. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

**The way to remain pure in marriage is to safeguard the heart. This requires deliberate steps and a holy resolve by believers to protect themselves from sexual temptation. In Matthew 5:29–30, Jesus used hyperbole to emphasize the danger of allowing oneself to give in to the temptation to sin sexually. While God’s standards seem foolish to the world, we must accept the Bible’s admonitions about the destructive nature of sin, and particularly of sexual sins (Proverbs 7:1–27; 1 Corinthians 6:18–20).**

**Jesus taught that sinful actions are the result of what is in a person’s heart (Matthew 15:19). God’s commandments not only address outward sinful actions, but also inward sinful thoughts (Hebrews 4:12). In Matthew 5:27–30, Jesus warned against both the act of adultery and the lust that leads to it. He then instructed people to take steps to avoid what ensnares them in such sins. They result in the sinner being “thrown into hell” (verse 30, NLT).**

**Don’t entertain lustful thoughts that lead to the act of adultery. When it comes to sexuality, do what it takes to safeguard your heart and keep yourself and your marriage pure.**

#### **Resource Packet Item 2: Pretty Woman**

Distribute the case study. You may wish to divide your class into small groups to read and discuss it. After giving students time to respond to the questions, allow volunteers to share their responses.

#### ***Discuss***

? What resources are you aware of that can help protect you from materials that can promote lust and sexual immorality? (Covenant Eyes is one resource. It is a website for accountability between a man and a friend, pastor, etc. See [www.covenanteyes.com](http://www.covenanteyes.com).)

? Why is a healthy marriage relationship a key element in safeguarding one’s heart against sexual immorality?

## **Part 3—Practice Mutual Love and Respect**

### **Respect Your Husband**

Ephesians 5:21–24

**[Eph 5:21-24 KJV] 21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. 22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. 24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so [let] the wives [be] to their own husbands in every thing.**

**Say:** Some people react negatively when they hear “submit” and “relationship” in the same sentence. Perhaps they equate the idea of submission with either being dominated by someone else or with being weak and passive. This is especially true in a society that values independence and assertiveness, especially in women. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

**The instructions in Ephesians 5:21–30 regarding the wife-husband relationship begin with the command for Christians to submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.** That is, follow the example of Jesus, who acted out of consideration for others rather than demanding His own way. The basis for the actions of both husbands and wives is the same: follow the example of Christ who is the Savior of the Church, who gave His life for His Church (verse 25).

[Eph 5:21 KJV] 21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

Within marriage, this means wives treat their husbands with the same respect and deference that the Church has for Christ. A wife does this because her husband carries the responsibility to lead, care, and provide for the family, just as Christ does for the Church. **This does not mean the wife is inferior to her husband, just that she acknowledges his role and responsibility in the home.**

**The underlying principle here is that authority and submission provide different opportunities to serve. In Christ, the value of a person is not determined by his or her role. The focus is on service, not power. Serving one another out of loving concern strips authority of its control and submission of its humiliation.**

**A wife who shows respect for her husband will find him going out of his way to make her happy. God created in men an innate sense of headship, that is, the need to lead, provide, and protect those they are responsible for. When a husband’s efforts to do these things are acknowledged and appreciated, he will go all out to do his best for his family.**

***Discuss***

? How can a wife show respect to her husband even if she is struggling to feel that respect?

? What insight does 1 Peter 3:1–6 provide on how a wife is to interact with her husband?

## **Love Your Wife**

Ephesians 5:25–30

**[Eph 5:25-30 KJV] 25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. 28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. 29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: 30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.**

**Say:** A husband also shows submission through loving concern for his wife, putting her well-being first. As husbands do so, they follow the example of Christ, who laid down His life for the Church and works to provide for its well-being. A husband is to show the same care for his wife as he does for his own body. Again, Christ is the example in His care for the Church. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

### **Men and women are wired different?**

**Generally speaking, men have an innate need to be respected, and women have an innate need to be loved. Love provides a wife with a sense of security, like respect provides a husband with a sense of affirmation. The love shown to a wife is an unselfish love that seeks the highest good for her. Christ is the model who chose to serve His bride, the Church, and build her up.**

While women may question their need to submit, men may struggle with the challenge to live up to the example of Christ (Ephesians 5:25–26). The standard is demanding, as it is focused on self-sacrifice and putting the needs of another first. However, Scripture makes it clear that showing this kind of love and care benefits the husband also (verse 28). **Perhaps this benefit is found as the husband's need for affirmation, appreciation, respect, and yes, even love, are met.**

**Too many couples are caught in a cycle of dysfunction. He doesn't feel like she respects his hard work and efforts to provide, so he withdraws emotionally. She doesn't feel loved, so her lack of security in the relationship leads to dissatisfaction. Usually, one of them must be strong**

**enough to acknowledge the cycle of dysfunction and to make the first move to end his or her part of the cycle. With God's help, the cycle of love and respect can be restored, which will steer the couple back toward a healthy, happy marriage.**

### **Resource Packet Item 3: Got On the Love and Respect Cycle**

Distribute the work sheet to students. After giving them time to answer the questions, ask volunteers to share their responses. Since some answers may be more personal in nature, you may prefer to use this sheet as a take-home piece for couples to use on their own.

#### ***Discuss***

? What are some ways a husband can show love for his wife?

? In what ways is the example of Christ encouraging or discouraging when thinking about how husbands and wives are to interact with one another?

## **What Is God Saying to Us?**

**Say:** God designed marriage to be a lifelong, fulfilling relationship. For this to happen, couples must commit to purity and faithfulness in their marriages. A happy, healthy marriage takes work as the demands of work, children, and extended family must be balanced with finding the time and energy to strength the husband-wife relationship. The marriage relationship is a reflection of the relationship between Christ and His Church, making the need for love and respect evident.

## **Living It Out**

### **Ministry in Action**

- Examine your actions, compared to the biblical standard for marriage.
- Do at least one thing this week to better meet the needs of your spouse.
- Commit to purity and faithfulness before and in marriage.

## **Daily Bible Readings**

### **Monday:**

God Institutes Marriage.  
Genesis 1:26–28

**[Gen 1:26-28 KJV] 26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 27 So God created man in his [own] image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. 28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.**

### **Tuesday:**

Sin Strained Marriage.

Genesis 3:6–19

**[Gen 3:6-19 KJV] 6 And when the woman saw that the tree [was] good for food, and that it [was] pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make [one] wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. 7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they [were] naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. 8 And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. 9 And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where [art] thou? 10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I [was] naked; and I hid myself. 11 And he said, Who told thee that thou [wast] naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? 12 And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest [to be] with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. 13 And the LORD God said unto the woman, What [is] this [that] thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. 14 And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou [art] cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: 15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. 16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire [shall be] to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. 17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed [is] the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat [of] it all the days of thy life; 18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; 19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou [art], and unto dust shalt thou return.**

**Wednesday:**

Sin's Curse Marred Marriage.

Genesis 3:16–21

**[Gen 3:16-21 KJV] 16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire [shall be] to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. 17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed [is] the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat [of] it all the days of thy life; 18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; 19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou [art], and unto dust shalt thou return. 20 And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the**

mother of all living. 21 Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

**Thursday:**

A Marriage Blessed by God.  
Luke 1:5–25

**[Luk 1:5-25 KJV] 5 There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife [was] of the daughters of Aaron, and her name [was] Elisabeth. 6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. 7 And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were [now] well stricken in years. 8 And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, 9 According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. 10 And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense. 11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. 12 And when Zacharias saw [him], he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. 13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. 14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. 15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. 16 And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. 17 And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. 18 And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years. 19 And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings. 20 And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season. 21 And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple. 22 And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless. 23 And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house. 24 And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying, 25 Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on [me], to take away my reproach among men.**

**Friday:**

Avoid Unholy Unions.  
2 Corinthians 6:14–18

**[2Co 6:14-18 KJV] 14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in [them]; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean [thing]; and I will receive you, 18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.**

**Saturday:**

A Model of True Love.  
Philippians 2:1–8

**[Phi 2:1-8 KJV] 1 If [there be] therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, 2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, [being] of one accord, of one mind. 3 [Let] nothing [be done] through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. 4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. 5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.**