

The Covenantal Life  
Week 4 - Making a Marriage (Part 2)

- The authority structures designed by God matter - we are called to submit to His order as creatures
  - The world is established with intermediary governing institutions—family, church, state—and all have a role to play in forming a proper marriage
- Family - particularly the bride's father has a central role
  - Gen. 29, Ex. 22:16-17, Deut. 22:28-29, 1 Sam. 18:25-27
    - The permission and blessing of the bride's father are necessary
  - Rooted in covenant headship - God created the world patriarchally, and all authority comes from God and is delegated by Him
    - For a man to be the head in his own family, he must secure approval from the man already head over the woman he desires to marry
    - The father has authority to ensure the prospective husband is godly and worthy
    - The prototype is God delegating to Adam authority over Eve
    - Even outside the direct headship of father over daughter, the family has a significant role in making a marriage (Proverbs)
- Church - marriage is a spiritual union established by God, existing by His standard - the church teaches, affirms the word of God, and so instructs, affirms, and validates marriage
  - 1 Cor. 5:1-2, 1 Cor. 7:2-5, Heb. 13:4
  - Church speaks on God's authority in both formation and dissolution of marriage
  - Church's involvement points to the ultimate authority on which marriage exists
- State - Marriage is a public reality with societal ramifications, must be defined and protected by civil law
  - State legally recognizes that two have truly become one, covenant exists
  - Modern collapse of family and church leads to state as highest authority
- Each sphere has responsibility to hold marriages accountable to covenant law
  - State (Deut. 22:22-23, Lev. 20:10-16); Church (1 Cor. 5:1-2, Col. 3:16); Family
- No sphere has unlimited authority, all can become tyrannical
  - Seeking to live within these designed principles helps us to see when one sphere needs to check another, or even when an authority must be resisted outright
- Each of these play a role in God's design for marriage - none are as concrete or determinative as sexual union
  - Sexual union remains the strongest, most indispensable and truly necessary element in making a marriage covenant - understanding and living this out is the first step in returning to God's design for marriage