God's Master Plan for Marriage

- **God's Five-fold Purpose for Marriage**

- **Mission No. 1**: To Glorify God
- **Mission No. 2**: To Be a Companion to Your Spouse
- **Mission No. 3**: To Minister to Your Spouse
- **Mission No. 4**: To Produce Godly Offspring
- **Mission No. 5**: To Be the Basic Unit for Kingdom Purposes in Society

Mission No. 1: To Glorify God

- **Five ways a married couple can reflect aspects of God's image:**

1. "God is love" **(1 John 4:16)**
2. Marriage – A model on earth to Christ-Church relationship **(Ephesians 5:22, 25)**
3. Partnering with God in procreation **(Genesis 1:28)**
4. Dominion over creation **(Genesis 1:28)**
5. Marriage is an earthly illustration of the Trinity – a family is a miniature trinity.

Mission No. 2: Friendship & Companionship

- "For Adam no suitable helper was found" **(Genesis 2:20)**
- "This now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh, she shall be called woman, for she was taken out of man" **(Genesis 2: 24)**
- "For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" **(Genesis 2:24)**

❖ Friendship is the hallmark of great marriage!

Mission No. 3:
To Minister to Your Spouse

- One's spouse plays a key role in meeting his and her needs for security, self-worth and significance
- Fellowship and companionship (**Genesis 1:28**)
- Spiritual needs (**Eph. 5:21; 1 Corinthians 7:14**)
- Sexual needs (**Song of Songs; 1 Corinthians 7:3**)
- Emotional needs (**Genesis 24:67**)
- Growth needs (**Proverbs 27:17**)

Mission No. 4:
To Produce Godly Offspring

- Children are a reward from the Lord **(Psalm 127: 3-5)**
- Marriage and a godly home are needed good children **(Malachi 2:14-15)**
- *"Train up a child in the way they should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it"* **(Proverbs 22:6)**
- Home: is the first and most important institution for raising children. Church (Sunday School), and School, come thereafter **(Deuteronomy 6:4-9).**

Mission No. 5: To be the Basic Unit for Kingdom Purposes in Society

- The world needs godly offspring
- The world needs us as models
- The world needs us to reflect divine love
- The world needs us to serve society
  - ***"The ruin of a nation begins in the homes of its people"*** (Ghanaian proverb)

Summary

- **Your marriage is important because it is the greatest instrument on earth to:**

1. Glorify God
2. Minister to your needs & to those of your spouse
3. Fulfill your yearning for companionship
4. Produce godly offspring, and
5. Be a witness to and serve the needy world.

Value – Everyone in the Family

- **Objectives**

1. To worship God and to celebrate the beauty of his plan for families together.
2. To demonstrate the wonder of everyone belonging in family.
3. To welcome visitors & family members to our church family.

- **Text**: *For the Lord is good. His unfailing love endures forever, and his faithfulness continues to each generation.* **(Psalm 100:5)**

We all belong in a family

- Families are God's idea.
- In the beginning, He made Adam and Eve, a man and a woman. God said, "It is good" about all his creation.
- But in **Genesis 2:18**. He said, ***"It is not good".*** What was not good? ***"It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."***
- So God made Eve and He brought her to Adam.

We all belong in a family

- **Family Responsibilities**

- *"Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to provide the poor wanderer with shelter – when you see the naked to clothe him and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?"* **(Isaiah 58:6-7).**

- *"Those who won't care for their own relatives, especially those living in the same household, have denied what we believe. Such people are worse than unbelievers"* **(1 Timothy 5:8).**

Value – Committed Couples

- **Objectives**
  1. To explore the mystery of marriage.
  2. To show how men and women should relate as couples.
  3. To call all to 'be filled with the Spirit'.

Text:

- *"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and the two will become one flesh." This is a profound mystery – but I am talking about Christ and the church.* **(Ephesians 5:31-32)**

A. Men and women as people

- **What the Bible says**

- Genesis 1 and 2 come before the Fall. These first chapters in the Bible lay the foundations for marriage. The rest of the Bible builds on the foundation but does not change it. We need to spend some time and care to understand what Genesis 1 and 2 say about men, women and the marriage relationship.

Men and women as people

1. ***We are equal in worth, dignity and value before God.*** God created man and woman equally in his image. Here is **Genesis 1:27** (in NIV):
   - *God created man in his own image,*
   - *in the image of God he created him;*
   - *male and female he created them.*
2. ***We are different*. Genesis 1** stresses our **equality** and **Genesis 2** speaks of our **differences.** We need to hold on to both. The method of creation is different. Man is made from the dust; God breathes into him (Vs 7). Woman is made from man (Vs 27).

Men and women as people

3. ***God made us to need one another.***

In the first 'not good' of history, the LORD God said, "*It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him*" (Genesis 2:18).

- When a person is alone they need a friend.
- In the Bible 'helper' is most often used of God helping us. E.g. In **Psalm 118:7**: "*The LORD is with me; he is my helper*".

B. Men and women in marriage

1. ***A man will leave his father and mother.*** The marriage relationship comes before all others!
2. ***And be united to his wife.*** Marriage is the union of one man and one woman in intimate, life-long relationship and companionship.
3. ***And the two shall become one flesh.*** This refers to sexual intercourse which comes after leaving and being united and so is kept for marriage.

Men and women in marriage

- ***The man and his wife were both naked and they felt no shame* (Genesis 2:25).**
  - This is an important feature in a good marriage.
  - Physically nakedness, as well as openness and nakedness before each other in every area of life.
  - They have no secret things to hide.
- What a blessing to be able to be absolutely open with another person without fearing rejection or scorn.

Cleaving

- **Cleaving involves unity in spirit and soul, as well as physical unity**
- Reasons why we fail to achieve Intimacy: 1) Different starting points, 2) Barriers within: **Fear of being vulnerable, Low self- esteem, Competitiveness.**
- Barriers within our cultures: Tradition, Modernity,
- Building Intimacy:
  1. **Christ-centredness - we bear God's image;**
  2. **Commitment to making 'adjustments';**
  3. **Total Love: Affection, Agape Love, Friendship,**

Cleave – Building Intimacy

4. **Effective Communication**

a) Speak the truth in love
b) Never use foul language
c) Be an active listener
d) Provide feedback
e) Aim at understanding
f) Learn to manage your emotions
g) Learn to say you're sorry!
h) Resolve conflicts
i) Never let the Sun go down in your anger
j) Never let anything stop you from talking to each other

Becoming One Flesh

- Three dimensions of 'Oneness': body, spirit and soul

1. **Spirit Oneness**: Sharing faith in Christ is key!
2. **Soul Oneness**: Touching each other:
   - Mentally,
   - Volitionally (**Proverbs 23:7**); and
   - Emotionally
3. **Body Oneness:**
   - General courtesy: respect of spouse as a person, treating each other in public, and 'shared secrets'
   - Non-sexual touching
   - Romance and Sex

C. Spirit filled marriage

- **Ephesians 5:22–33** is one of the best known and most important passages on marriage in the Bible. It really starts back in **verses 18–22:** the filling of the **Spirit.**
- **Be filled with the Spirit.** It is <u>impossible</u> for us to meet our responsibilities as husbands and wives on our own.
- We will never ever manage it alone but praise God we are not on our own. **In verse 18,** we are promised the help of God's Holy Spirit.

Be Spirit filled…

- We must never deal with the section on marriage without first emphasising our need for the filling of God's Spirit to help us.
- In Ephesians, St. Paul applies the filling of the Spirit to: **marriage (5:22-33), parenting (6:1-4); work (6:5-9).**
- Then comes the passage on <u>spiritual warfare</u> **(6:10-18). Teaching on marriage begins and ends with the Spirit.** That is not an accident.

D. The Mystery of Marriage

- **In Ephesians 5:22–33** Paul is writing very practically about marriage … when he suddenly breaks in with an amazing statement about the larger purpose of marriage:

1. ***This is a profound mystery - but I am talking about Christ and the church.*** **(Ephesians 5:32).**

   A mystery is not something that is too hard to understand but we <u>don't understand its real meaning until someone explains it to us</u>. It is like that with marriage.

The Mystery of Marriage

- Marriage is more than a human institution. Its real meaning is to provide the best picture on earth of the relationship of Christ and Christians.
- In trying to explain the mystery, preachers use words like **model, parable, symbol, role play**. We must keep the <u>emphasis on Christ and the church</u> as we look at these verses which describe our responsibilities in marriage!

The Mystery of Marriage

2. ***Husbands love your wives just as Christ loves the church.*** As you read verses 25 to 32 you will see that it is all about the love of Jesus. Christ's love for the church is fantastic.

   - Husbands have the great **privilege** and **challenge** of loving their wives as Christ loves us. They have a responsibility to protect and to provide for their wives as Jesus does for us.

The Mystery of Marriage

3. ***Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord.*** (Verses 22-24). This is also hard. We have looked at the responsibility of a husband first so that the responsibility of a wife can be seen in perspective.
   - A wife, who understands that marriage is a role play of Christ and the church, will see that her submission is not belittling her.
   - She is made in the image of God just as much as her husband and in marriage she is one with him.
   - In that oneness she is living out the part God has assigned in the great drama of life.

The Mystery of Marriage

4. ***The wedding of the Lamb has come.***

   (Revelation 19:7) The mystery of marriage reaches its fulfilment with the wedding of Christ and the church which is his people and his bride.

   - Every human marriage points forward to that glorious day.

Valued Children

- **What the Bible says**

A. Children are a real live blessing (**Psalm 127:4**)

B. Children are important to God (**Mark 10:13-16**)

C. God is the Author of life (**Genesis 17:2; 21:1-2**)

Children are valued

D. A marriage without children is <u>complete</u> and <u>blessed</u> by God.

- Both Sarah (**Genesis 16:1-16**) and Rachel (**Genesis 30**) felt incomplete as women because they had no children.
- Their efforts to solve the problem led to family strife and division.
- It is no different today in many societies and cultures!

Valued Children

E. **Bringing children up in the Lord**

- Children are so valuable to God and to us that bringing children up well is an awesome responsibility.
- Examples: 'My *son, keep your father's commands and do not forsake your mother's teaching'* **(Proverbs 6:20)**
- '*And now a word to you fathers. Don't make your children angry by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction approved by the Lord.'* **(Ephesians 6:4 NLT).**
- Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Malachi 4:5-6; and Luke 1:17.

Value – Sexual Purity

- **Introduction**

- We live in a sexually supercharged era.
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- Sex is high on people's agenda.

Sexual Purity

- **What the Bible says**
- God our Maker knows what is best for us. His restrictions are not a prison fence to shut us in from fulfilment ***but a fence of protection to keep us away from harm.*** His way is good, pleasing and perfect. The Bible shows us that in the plan of God sex is godly and beautiful.

Sexual Purity

- **A. Sex is Excellent**
- **Genesis 1:27** tells us that God created us in His image, male and female.
- The very next verse says, *"God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number'"* **(verse 28).** God surely knew that we cannot be fruitful unless we have sex!
- Then we read, "*God saw all that he had made and it was very good*" **(verse 31).**

"You'll know the truth and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32)

- A couple that was married for two years prayed for a child, to no avail. They went to their pastor for counseling, only for the pastor to discover that the couple was not having sex – they thought it was sinful!

Sexual Purity

- **B. Sex is Enjoyable**

- Married love-making is for **pleasure** as well as for **procreation**. Sex is fun! It comes as a surprise to many people to discover that God meant us to enjoy sex.
- He gave us all our instincts and physical desires for our good. His purpose was not to torment us, but to bring us happiness and fulfilment.

Sexual Purity

- God's best for married couples is that they are transported with delight as they give themselves to each other – body, soul and spirit.
- In **Proverbs 5:18**, He says:

  "Rejoice in the wife of your youth - a loving doe, a graceful deer; may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be captivated by her love."

Sexual Purity

- In the **Song of Solomon,** God saying a big '**YES**' to the way he made us **man and woman.** Here are a few verses from the wedding night in **chapter 4** to encourage you to read the whole song:
  - *How beautiful you are, my darling! Oh, how beautiful!*
  - *Your lips are like a scarlet ribbon; your mouth is lovely.*
  - *Your two breasts are like two fawns, like twin fawns of a gazelle.*
  - *Your lips drop sweetness as the honeycomb, my bride;*
  - *Milk and honey are under your tongue.*
  - *All beautiful you are, my darling; there is no flaw in you.*

Sexual Purity

- **C. Sex is Exclusive**

- In the wisdom of God, sexual intercourse is exclusive to marriage. This means no sex before marriage and no sex outside marriage. In Genesis, we read about God's plan for marriage. A man and a woman must first leave their families, and be publicly united before they become one flesh (2:24).
- Sexual intercourse is the final climax of the process of getting married. It is the **sign** and **seal** of the marriage covenant. God's ideal is monogamy – one man, one wife, and that for life.

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Contact Information

Dr. Peter Okaalet

Executive Director,

Okaalet and Associates Limited

P. O. Box 30819 - 00100

Nairobi, Kenya

Cell: +254 707 181 708

E- mail: pokaalet@pokaalet.org