

January 24/25, 2025

"Gospel-Shaped Marriage"

Pastor Aaron Buer



Beyond the
Weekend

SPEND DAILY TIME WITH GOD AS YOU READ, THINK, PRAY + ACT.

2026 Focus: 12 Months of Prayer | **January:** Prayers of Praise

Each month, journey through a different biblical model of prayer.

Day 1 [Genesis 1:27-28](#) | God's Design for Marriage

So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. Genesis 1:27

In the beginning, God creates man and woman with purpose and intention. He forms both male and female in his image, each distinct yet equally valuable. He then establishes marriage as a reflection of himself. Just as Father, Son and Holy Spirit exist in perfect relationship—equal in nature yet distinct in role—God designs marriage to mirror this divine partnership. Centuries later, Paul writes to believers in the bustling city of Ephesus about how to live together in Jesus. He doesn't invent new teaching about marriage. Instead, he points back to this Genesis blueprint ([Ephesians 5:31](#)). The Ephesian church includes people from vastly different backgrounds, and Paul reminds them that every relationship, including marriage, should grow from the soil of Jesus's example on the cross.

The world today offers many definitions of marriage and what it can be. God, as our creator, knows what is best for us. We are called to surrender to his design for our good and flourishing. We submit to his authority when we release our desire to define our world and instead live according to his Word. For instance, as husbands and wives serve, encourage and love each other, they show a watching world what God is like. This is his design for all of our relationships, including marriage.

TODAY: Using Genesis as a starting point, ask God whether your view of marriage and relationships lines up with his Word. Ask him to reveal the places where you aren't reflecting his design. Then ask him for strength to more fully reflect his heart of service in relationships.

Day 2 [Ephesians 5:31](#) | Covenant in Marriage

For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. Ephesians 5:31

Paul understands marriage as a covenantal relationship: two partners who make binding promises to each other and work together to reach a common goal. The covenants God makes with humans spread across the pages of the Bible, including Adam and Eve, Abraham, Israel, and David. Paul tells the Ephesians that the covenant of marriage is unique. The promises kept between two imperfect people reveal the kind of relationship God desires to have with his people—one involving self-sacrifice, delight, and honor. Marriage also points to the ultimate covenant keeper, Jesus. Through the cross, believers can find hope.

Our beliefs about God show up in our closest relationships. Marriage today is still meant to be a covenant of promise-keeping. Yet, if we are honest, we often replace this goal with a desire for happiness and self-satisfaction. Like the Ephesians, we live out the idols of our age. God's design for marriage invites us to more.

While a healthy marriage points to Jesus, an unhealthy one reveals the reality of a sinful world. How we live has eternal value. God develops faithfulness in us when we accept Jesus's sacrifice on the cross for our sins and seek his help.

TODAY: Have you received the gift of new life in Jesus through his work on the cross? Today would be a great day to do so. Jesus is the ultimate answer for your relationships, including marriage. As you consider the finished work of Christ, join Ada Bible Worship in praising God through the song "[Faithfulness](#)."

Day 3 [Ephesians 5:21-22](#) | Respect and Honor

Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. Ephesians 5:22

Paul lays the groundwork for relationships in [Ephesians 5](#). The Ephesian believers' reverence for Christ should shape how they relate to one another ([Ephesians 5:21](#)). In the Greco-Roman world, it is rare to acknowledge women because they are treated as a commodity. Paul chooses not only to acknowledge them but to show honor by addressing the wives in the community first, inviting them into a countercultural conversation. He calls wives to respect their husbands in the same way they respect Christ ([Ephesians 5:33](#)), which reflects the gospel in how they honor and encourage them.

Copying and pasting this Scripture into our context can be challenging because it is often misunderstood. We are all called to show respect to one another, but it looks different depending on the relationship. For wives, it is a call to honor our husbands. This means valuing the image of God in him, partnering to help him reach his God-given potential, seeking his best and being mindful of how impactful our words can be. This is different from the world, and when lived out, it reflects God's heart and character to those who don't know him.

TODAY: Ask your husband, or a significant person in your life if not married, how and when he feels respected. Then commit to show one tangible expression of respect toward him each day this week. Explore gospel-shaped marriage further on the Beyond the Weekend Podcast. Find it wherever you listen to podcasts or on YouTube [HERE](#).

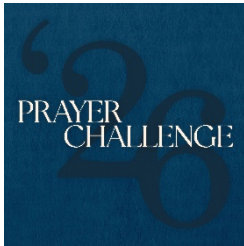
Day 4 [Ephesians 5:25-30](#) | Nourish and Cherish

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and give himself up for her. Ephesians 5:25

Paul now turns his attention to the men of the young Ephesian church. His words are as countercultural to them as his message to the women. Husbands are to love their wives in the same way Jesus loves his church. This is sacrificial love. It is a revolutionary concept for the Greco-Roman world because in their culture, marriage is often for status, not for love, and commitment is relative to a man's power and influence. Other than providing material needs, a man is not required to do more. Paul tells the Ephesian men this isn't what God requires. God requires men to live out his great love.

The call to sacrificial love is as revolutionary today as in Bible times. Modern culture, in all its achievements, hasn't moved past Rome. It tells us we should determine our relationships based on what we can get from them. Gospel-shaped marriages involve men who partner with God to nourish and cherish their wives. It looks like pouring into her in such a way that she can reach her God-given potential. A husband who does this is present. He serves his wife and gives her undivided attention. He goes out of his way to see her become all that God designed her to be. The way we love in our relationships shows the watching world how much Christ loves his people.

TODAY: Ask your wife, or a significant person in your life if not married, how and when she feels loved and cared for. Then, over the coming week, commit to loving her in one tangible way each day.



Day 5 [Psalm 150](#) | Praise through Song

This year in Beyond the Weekend, journey through different biblical models of prayer—one each month. January's focus is Prayers of Praise.

Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD. Psalm 150:6

The book of Psalms contains a collection of prayers and songs from Israel's deepest moments. The psalmists model praise and prayers through varying life circumstances—stinging betrayal ([Psalm 55](#)), gripping fear and anxiety ([Psalm 27](#) & [46](#)) and deep grief ([Psalm 13](#)). Psalm 150 erupts in a jubilant conclusion, calling God's people to a fitting response: praise. Whether in seasons of plenty or want, God's people are to slow down and give him praise. The psalmist links praise with singing and music, encouraging God's people to lift their voices and praise the Lord with joyful sounds.

We, too, are called to praise God, whatever our circumstances. Whether we're walking through betrayal, fear, anxiety, grief, or experiencing joy and abundance, praise connects us to God as we lift our voices in song. Music, prayer and praise intertwine in a powerful way. Our worship of God extends to all of life, but praising God through song offers a unique opportunity. Some of us are more musically inclined than others, which is okay. The calling is to lift our voices to the Lord in praise, regardless of talent. We do this as we gather as a church on weekends, and we also have this opportunity in private and with loved ones during the week.

TODAY: Take time to slow down and lift your voice to God in praise. Let the words of the song become your prayer to God. Consider singing "[Praise the Lord](#)" by Shane and Shane, a music version of Psalm 150. As you sing, reflect upon the goodness of God and "praise him for his surpassing greatness" ([Psalm 150:2](#)).