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The Idea That I Won't Be Married to My Wife in Heaven Makes My Heart Hurt

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#STRask - Stand to Reason

Questions about what the absence of marriage in Heaven will mean for you and your spouse, thoughts regarding two Christians signing a prenup, whether it's okay to want to get married because you want to have sex, and a wife taking over spiritual leadership.

- * My pastor said marriage won't be necessary in Heaven anymore, so where does that leave me and my wife? The thought of my wife of eight years and mother of my child being "just a friend" makes my heart hurt.
- * What are your thoughts on two Christians signing a prenup before getting married?
- * Is it okay for me to want to get married because I want to have sex a lot?
- * Does the spiritual leader role fall on my shoulders when my husband is not spiritually leading our family?

Transcript

This is Stand to Reason's hashtag S-T-R-S-Podcast. Welcome. We're so glad you're here.

And we're not just saying this to ourselves. You know, it's so funny because I, it's easy to forget there are people listening. And then I go out there and people say, oh, when you said this and that, and I'm like, oh, you're actually listening to that.

It's nice. It's nice to know. All right.

Today, Greg, we have questions about marriage, or related to marriage in different ways. So this first one comes from Josh. My pastor said recently that marriage won't be necessary in heaven anymore.

So where does that leave me and my wife? Because the thought of my wife of eight years and mother of my child being just a friend makes my heart hurt. Love to hear your thoughts. Well,

yeah, I don't, I think your pastor is right.

And I just read this passage in the Gospel of Mark recently because I finished the Gospel of Mark in my own reading. But I don't think it's a demotion. It's a promotion.

Things aren't going to be less than, oh, just a friend. All of our relationships are going to be magnified. And I think when Paul says in 1 Thessalonians, chapter 4, to comfort one another with the words that the dead in Christ will be meeting us in the air with Christ at the resurrection.

That is comforting because these are the people we know and love as opposed to a whole bunch of other Christians we don't know and love. But we will, you know, over time get to know them and love them, whatever. But there is a special place for those who are close to us.

And I think this is why, or that's a subtext rather to Paul's comments there at 1 Corinthians 4. I'm sorry, 1 Thessalonians 4. So comfort one another with these words. So you're going to be rejoined with those that you care about. But it's not a demotion from intimate to friend.

All the intimacy that you have now in the closeness, you are going to share. But you won't share sex because that doesn't seem to be a part of what's going on in heaven according to Jesus' words. But nevertheless, the intimacy that is gained or ought to be the consequence of the best kind of sexual encounter with a person's spouse is going to be there without that vehicle, it seems to me, and better.

And I'm not saying better sex. I mean, it's going to be better than sex. I think that's the totally wrong way to look at it.

By the way, I think about this stuff myself as a married man and then moving towards my graduation here. I saw something I wrote yesterday that said I wrote it a while ago. I said, I couldn't say I'm a middle-aged anymore.

Those days are long gone. But I think the intimacy that we experience in heaven is going to be much more satisfying. I think this experience here is kind of an earnest or a down payment or a taste.

But it's simply a taste. It isn't the thing itself. It isn't the fullness and the richness.

So I don't think you can, Josh, you can be comfortable or you can breathe freely here because your relationship with your wife is not going to be demoted to a mere friend. It's going to be increased. Your relationship is still going to be the closeness that you have.

If she goes before you, you can comfort yourself with the words of Paul that she's going to be with you. Her. It's comforting because you know you'll see her again, not just one of billions that you have the same kind of friendship with.

She's special. You're going to be with her. And it's going to be, in all ways, a step up.

Remember Paul says in Romans 8, he said, I don't consider the sufferings of this present life to bear any resemblance to the glory that is to follow. And his point there is it's going to be so great. It's going to make even the anguishes that we experience just fade away, disappear, dissipate.

It's meaningless comparison because it's going to be so good. And I think that gives us a hint as what the relationships that we're going to have with other people are going to be like in heaven as well. So much better than what they were here on earth that what we had on earth is going to, in a sense, almost disappear in terms of magnitude.

It'll seem so modest compared to what we now experience in an unfallen state. What do you think? I don't know if I have anything to add to that. That's such a great way to put it.

Just imagine if even with the closeness that you have with her now, there's still sin between you, separating you. Once that's gone and there's nothing keeping you apart, it will be even better. Naked and not ashamed.

I think it's the way I put it in the story of reality. We get to that point. And once again, we will be there.

No shame. Total, total exposure. Because we have nothing to hide at that point.

Nothing to hide, right? All right. Here is a question from Paul Garrett Del Rio. What are your thoughts regarding two Christians signing a pre-nut before getting married? Well, I haven't thought about that, to be honest with you very much.

The problem, I think, with it, I understand the practical element, the utility of it. In a world where so many people go through divorce, and this has meant to simplify things, in particular, it's meant to keep one person's goods from being taken by the other person. That's the whole idea of a pre-nut.

But it does strike me as odd that one is pledging to stay forever with someone until death to us part, and then making a specialized agreement just in case. It almost anticipates the inevitability of a divorce. And that's what I don't like about pre-nuts.

I don't know, like I said, I think there's a utility, and sometimes crazy things happen in marriages. Then what? The biblical element, I would say, the moral element would be just this. If you're making a pledge to do what Jesus said, what man has joined together, let no man separate, Matthew 19, then why is it you're making provisions for separation, permanent separation? That would be the problem to me.

Yeah, I agree, Greg. I don't think you should, because you're already planting that seed in your mind. I got a way out.

I'm safe, so I got a way out. I got my stuff. I'm going to be able to keep my stuff.

Yeah. Maybe it's an estate or whatever, but it's still my stuff, and it's not the two becoming one in the deeper sense of sharing all things. Yeah, I just don't know what good it could do in terms of supporting the covenant that you're making, and that's what you want to be doing at that time.

You want to be all in. I don't know how you could survive if you're not all in. So I wouldn't want to put that in the back of my mind.

Right. Now, if you're not a Christian and you expect this is a possibility, this makes perfect sense to have a prenup. But with a person who has a Christian understanding of marriage, in light of what Jesus has said, in light of the creation order, and then I think one man with one woman becoming one flesh for one lifetime.

Yeah, I think a prenup is working against that notion. So let's go on to a question from Cyrus. Is it okay for me to want to get married because I want to have sex a lot? It's not the only reason, but it's a big reason.

Yes. And for a couple of reasons. God made human beings as sexual creatures.

And so the sexual element for men and women is a good thing. It needs to be protected because it's so powerful and God has given us the kind of, he has described and defined the kind of arrangement where sex can be experienced without shame and in its fullness, so to speak. I think it's in Proverbs 5, we're talking about sex.

It says always speaking to husbands now to men. Always be exhilarated with her love. Let her breasts satisfy you at all times.

That's pretty good. Now it's making a contrast to, you know, how does it put its figurative language here? He says, why would you want to take your, your streams, your pure streams and let them flow in the streets? You know, you don't want to pollute what is pure. And he's talking there about sexual sin, but rather maintain your sexuality within this relationship.

Now, when especially men, but it's also true for women, but as a man, I can certainly identify with this. When our sexual drives are strong, we want them satisfied. And if the only appropriate way to satisfy them in a ritual, especially in a rich way where we're encouraged, especially by that passage in Proverbs, then that's in a marriage relationship.

Well, then we're going to seek that kind of relationship in order, partly in order to have that appropriate desire satisfied. And by the way, I just want to clarify this because I think a lot of women do not understand this, okay? For, I'm going to say, for well adjusted men, especially Christian men, sex is not simply about orgasm. Sex is a communion with another person, and it's a way they experience love in that relationship.

So if a woman, a wife has excluded her husband from her bed, no matter what else she is towards her husband in lots of other great ways, he will not believe that she loves him because

this is the way they understand love. I have heard this from so many men and counselors, and I bear witness myself to that as a dynamic, as a human being. And also in this wonderful marriage, I'm sorry, a wonderful book, Sacred Marriage, probably the best book I've ever read on marriage, subtitled, maybe God designed marriage not to make you happy, but to make you holy.

But that author talks very frankly about the way this plays out in men's life. It's not a dirty thing. It's not a nasty thing.

Their mind isn't in the gutter. It's right where it belongs, especially with regards to their wife. So much so that Paul says in 1 Corinthians 7, the first five verses, husbands, your body belongs to your wife.

Wives, your body belongs to your husband for the sake of sexual gratification because of temptations. And that's why you need to nurture that aspect of your relationship. My sense is this is one aspect that gets kind of unheralded in Christian circles of the church, but it ought to be emphasized because it's so important.

So that a single man has sexual desire. Paul addresses in 1 Corinthians 7. It's not good. He starts out by saying that for a man to touch a woman sexually.

That's what he's talking about. But because of immorality, he's let every man have his own wife and every woman, her own husband. Why? For sex.

But it's not just to have an orgasm. It's to pursue the intimacy that is so important to that kind of relationship. And the pleasurable aspect is connected to the relational aspect in well-developed and healthy individuals.

Obviously, there are screwballs. The culture has really messed that all up. But I think for most well-meaning Christian men, their counterparts, either maybe their fiancé's or their wives, do not understand how critically connected their responsiveness and availability to their husband is sexually to their sense of being feeling loved and feeling safe in that relationship.

And the bottom line is Paul's really, really specific there. This is precisely the reason why he said, yes, have your own wife for this reason. And of course, like you said, there are other reasons also.

But this is definitely a legitimate reason. All right, here's a question from Anonymous. My husband is a Christian, but is not spiritually leading our family.

He has not made any effort to attend church, and finding a church for the kids in me has been a real struggle for me. Does the spiritual leader role fall on my shoulders now, particularly when it comes to finding a church home? Well, there's going to be people who give you different answers on this, but my answer would be yes. If your husband doesn't lead spiritually, you don't abandon your spiritual goals.

And I think it's fair to ask your husband, though you have to be careful how you do this. Honey, I know you say you're a Christian. You have a Christian.

You self-identify as a Christian. But I honestly, after these years together, I'm not sure what that means, because you don't seem to have any spiritual hunger at all, and you don't show any interest in spiritually guiding our family, including our children. I need to understand what's going on with you.

Help me understand that. Now, that's a tough conversation to have because it's somewhat accusatory, but I don't know how you can avoid it in a marriage relationship under these circumstances. And the fact is she said to fact or single mom here, at least with regards to her spiritual life and the spiritual life of the family, and so she needs to take the reins and be the guide as a spiritual mom and help the children to grow spiritually if the father isn't willing to do that.

The alternative is, some people I say, no, he's a spiritual leader. Don't take over. He's going to have to do it.

And then what happens? Then mom can't fulfill whatever responsibility she has to be a spiritual force in the lives of her children. Greg, tell me if you think this would be helpful. If she's worried about him feeling like she's usurping his authority as a spiritual leader, which maybe he doesn't even, maybe he's not even that interested, because it sounds like he hasn't even made any effort to attend church.

But maybe she could just say, I really want to support you as the spiritual leader. And I realize this isn't something you want to do right now. So I'm going to be doing this, but please know I would love for you to do this.

And I will, if when you want to take it up, it's yours. It's your position to have, but I'm going to fill in for you until you want to do that. But I don't want you to take that as me kind of asserting myself over you.

I'm still, I'm, I would still like you to be. I think that's great. It's going to be part of an awkward conversation.

I think so. Does, does, I wasn't sure about the, the, the question, what did it see? Does it seem to her that he thinks he's a spiritual leader, but he's not? No. And that if she takes initiative, then he'll feel like, um, overshadowed or.

No, she doesn't go into that, but she does say at the beginning, my husband is a Christian, but is not spiritually leading. Um, so I mean, that may not even be a factor. If she starts doing that, he, he's not going to say, wait a minute.

That's my job. Well, then why aren't you doing it? You know, kind of thing. Maybe I come to Jesus moment and just look at this as a problem.

And sometimes marriages have to have those kinds of conversations. Uh, but yes, do not abandon. Don't abandon your children or, or yourself in terms of your spirit.

Your spiritual life for lack of your husband's leadership. Mm hmm. That has to be such, it's so hard to, um, to lead your children in that way when the husband's not behind you.

I, it's, it's, you, to do it properly is hard anyway. Mm hmm. But, um, it's already plenty hard enough.

But when, when you have two that are on the same page, um, but when you heavily, but you have a diversity here of spiritual interest that makes it that much harder. Well, thank you, Josh, Paul Cyrus and Anonymous. We really appreciate hearing from you.

And just as a reminder, you just, all you have to do is go to X, use the hashtag STR Ask or you can go to our website. Now, I know not everybody has X. So you can always go to our website, STR.org. Just look at the top of the page there. You'll see our podcast pages and you'll find hashtag STR Ask.

There's a link right at the top left. You click on that. All you have to do is send us a two or three sentence question.

And, uh, we will, we save them. I, I have them all saved too. And I sometimes go back and I find other things.

I'm trying to find thematic, you know, questions for each day. And, um, so if you haven't heard back, that doesn't mean you never will, but you can always send another one. Um, and we look forward to hearing from you.

This is Amy Hall and Greg Coco for Stand to Reason.