What the Lord Desires in His Bride

(Selected Scriptures)
3/16/08



Introduction:
John the Baptist was the "best man" for the groom (Jesus Christ) *John 3:29*

Basic teachings of the metaphor – "The Bride of Christ":

1) **Election:** The Father chose a Bride for His Son (Jn. 6:37, 39, 44, 65).
2) **Engagement:** The downpayment of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13-14).
3) **Rapture:** The Son is coming back to receive only His Bride unto Himself (Mt. 25:1-13).
4) **Wedding:** Eternity with Christ (Rev. 19:7-9, 21:9).

- ***The Lord desires what every groom desires in his bride***

I. **The groom desires that his bride be a chaste virgin** *(Ephesians 5:25-27; 2 Corinthians 11:2)*
(Our Lord desires our Purity)

II. **The groom desires that his bride's heart is devoted to him** *(1 John 2:15)*
(Our Lord desires our Love)

> *Note: The Lord never divorces His bride (Hebrews 13:5)*

III. **The groom desires that his bride's eyes are only for him** *(James 4:4; Hebrews 13:5)*
(Our Lord desires our Contentment)



IV. **The groom desires that his bride cares about pleasing him**
(Our Lord desires our Dedication) *(2 Corinthians 5:9; Colossians 1:16)*

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Introduction: Last weekend my daughter Laura became engaged to Paul Fulks.

The Church is the bride of Christ (Eph. 5:22-27; Rev. 19:6-9, 21:9, 22:17).

John the Baptist was the "best man" for the groom (Jesus Christ)

John 3:29 - He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

Here John identifies Christ as the Bridegroom, and John as the friend of the bridegroom.

The groom (Jesus) has the bride (believers) and the "best man" rejoices in the blessing that the groom has. He is not envious that the groom has the bride (as Jesus had so many disciples); instead, he has joy.

"In verse 29, John refers to himself as 'the friend of the bridegroom,' a rough equivalent to our culture's best man. According to Jewish tradition, the friend was a liaison between the bride and the bridegroom. He would arrange the details of the wedding—such as sending out invitations, making announcements, and presiding over the marriage feast. His special duty, however, was to guard the bridal chamber.

"He would let no one into that chamber except the bride, who secretly slipped away from the celebrating crowd to join the groom. Sometime later, after the union was consummated, the groom came out and announced the fact with a shout. Upon hearing the groom's voice, the friend of the bridegroom would be happy and relieved. His job was done. His joy was full. He could now step out of the way.

The "Bride of Christ" metaphor:

a. Scripture: Jn. 3:29; Eph. 5:23-32; Rev. 19:7-9, 21:9, 22:17).

b. Important point: The term "Bride" refers to the church as a whole, the complete "wife" of Christ awaiting the Rapture and Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

c. Basic teachings of the metaphor – "The Bride of Christ":

1) **Election:** The Father chose a Bride for His Son (Jn. 6:37, 39, 44, 65).

John 6:37
All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

John 6:39
And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

John 6:44
No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 6:65
And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

2) **Engagement:** The downpayment of the Holy Spirit has been given to all believers with a promise of Christ's return to receive His purchased possession (Eph. 1:13-14).

Ephesians 1:13-14
In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

3) **Rapture:** The Son is coming back to receive only His Bride unto Himself (Mt. 25:1-13).

4) **Wedding:** Eternity with Christ (Rev. 19:7-9, 21:9).

Revelation 19:7-9
Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

Hallelujah for the <u>wedding to come</u> (Rev. 19:7-10)

"Give honor to Him" - just as the Father of a groom was honored along with the groom at a Jewish wedding, so will God the Father and the Son be honored at the wedding to come.

"His wife hath made herself ready" = she has beautified herself (with righteous living while on earth).

This verse is not talking about "working" to gain a relationship with the Groom; but working to look pleasing to the Groom.

The marriage of the Lamb (and the "marriage supper") occur chronologically <u>before</u> Christ's second coming to the earth for Armageddon since the Saints' clothed in "fine linen, clean and white" fits the exact description of those who return with Christ (v. 14).

"Clean" = her <u>purity</u> (II Cor. 11:2 - *"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.").*

"White" = her <u>brightness</u>
"For fine linen is the righteousness of saints" - throughout eternity we will wear a garment that will reflect the righteous deeds that we did while we lived on earth.

"Righteousness" = lit. righteous acts or deeds.
"The good works of believers will <u>constitute the wedding garment</u> when the congregation of the faithful are joined to Him in marriage" (Ryrie Study Bible).
Beware of how you live because you are sewing a wedding dress by everything you do.
Our good works do not save us, but do determine rewards to be received in heaven (I Cor. 3) (Even a cup of cold water in the name of Jesus will be rewarded).

V. 9
"Blessed (happy) are they who are called (invited) unto the marriage supper of the Lamb (Jesus Christ)"
They are blessed, truly blessed, in contrast to those who will be the <u>victims of a supper</u> at Armageddon (Rev. 19:17).

- ***The Lord desires what every groom desires in his bride***

I. The groom desires that his bride be a chaste virgin *(Ephesians 5:25-27)*
(Our Lord desires our Purity)

See: *Ephesians 5:25-27*
(Christ sacrificed for the Church because of a purity He desired in Her)

"Gave Himself" = lit. Himself He gave up.

Christ gave up Himself that He might marry the Church (those who would believe).

Christ's sacrifice for us was purely of grace (we didn't deserve it). There was nothing desirable in us!

Christ set us apart after He cleansed us (aor. pt.) with the Word. What is the word? That Christ "gave Himself."

When we believed the Word we were washed by the Holy Spirit and regenerated. (Tit. 3:5; Rom. 10:17). Now cleansed, we can serve Christ properly.

Being set apart, we have a special relationship with Christ. You are special to Christ.

Just as Christ does not call for the unsaved to love and adore Him, so we don't call for any other women to love and adore us the way our wives should.

When you said "I do"/"Yes" to Christ, you said "No" to the world. When you said "Yes" to your wife, you said "No" to all others.

ILLUS: Why does a bride wear a white wedding dress? Without spots, wrinkles, or blemish? It symbolizes purity.

Because Christ loves the Church, He does not want it to be spotted (stained) by sin or the world. He wants it set apart unto purity. "Keep yourselves unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).

2 Corinthians 11:2
For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

II. The groom desires that his bride's heart is devoted to him

(Our Lord desires our Love)

1 John 2:15 - Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

Verse 15

"Love not" - (*me agapate)* - Make a decision to stop your allegiance to and dedication to this old *cosmos*.

The New Testament uses two primary words translated "world."

1. *Aion* - this world's present *time*. The present age (with its degenerate moral characteristics) as opposed to God's future kingdom.

2. *Kosmos* - This world's present program. The Satanic inspired, humanistic system that is alienated from and in opposition to God.

Kosmos - used 79 times in John and 23 times in I John.

What *"Love not the world"* does not mean:

1. John is not saying that we should despise the planet (globe) upon which we live (that which God created was called good; we should not worship the creation, however.).

2. John is not saying that we shouldn't love people (mankind) (God loves the world in this sense and so should we - John 3:16).

"World" - *Cosmos* (cp. Cosmetics) - speaks of an adornment or an arrangement of things.

The "world" of which he speaks is not of the world order as God originally established, but of the world order which has been twisted and perverted by sin and Satan.

The word "world" refers tot he world's organized system (in its lust for material possessions and personal status) as headed by Satan ("the god of this world". . . "the prince of the power of the air"); a system which ignores God, glorifies the temporal, and opposes God's righteous ways.

The "world" is simply that system of man which has God left out (the worst thing about TV and movies is that they depict life without God as normal).

When John speaks of not loving the world, he is referring to a world order and mindset that is at enmity with god, lost in sin, wholly at odds with anything divine.

--This world has a wisdom that is not God's wisdom (I Cor. 3:19)

--This world has a ruler called "the prince of this world" (Jn. 12:31, 16:11)

--This world has a defilement to be avoided (Ja. 1:27; II Pet. 2:20)

--This world hates God and God's people (I John 3:13)

--This world is lulled to sleep in the arms of Satan (I John 5:19)

--This world has a way of thinking and doing things that is antithetical to God (Eph. 2:2)

Worldliness is a "radical individualism" that displays a kindly attitude toward Satan's evil world system and manifests itself in self-centeredness, self-advancement, and autonomy (Jon Trainer citing Chuck Colson).

"Neither the things that are in the world" - speaks of a materialistic mindset.

All believers must use the things in this world, but when we love them in place of God (when they become the center of our attention), we abuse their use (I Cor. 7:31 - "And they that use this world, as not abusing it, for the fashion of this world passeth away").

God promises to meet our needs for certain "things" when we seek first the kingdom of God (Mt. 6:33).

We ought to seek the "things" which are above (Col. 3:1-2 - "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth").

America has approximately 40,000 missionaries on the foreign field (over half are over 60 years old!).

America has approximately 40,000 students in "Bible colleges" and less than 400 will go to the foreign mission field. The greatest major in Bible colleges and universities today (sad to say) is Business not Bible! (Ron Brooks, Baptist World Mission).

What is the reason for such worldly priorities? They learned it at home.

Many times we are worldly and don't even realize it.
--We adopt worldly standards
--We adopt worldly views of husband and wife roles
--we adopt worldly views on child discipline
--We adopt worldly views on dating and marriage
--We adopt worldly views on church growth
--We adopt worldly views on handling problems
--We adopt worldly views on planning our future

"If <u>any man</u> love the world" - No one is excluded; worldliness affects everyone's fellowship with God.

"The love of the Father is not in him" - <u>Not</u> speaking of God's love for the person, but the person's love <u>for</u> God.

Note: The Lord never divorces His bride (Hebrews 13:5)

You cannot love the world and God at the same time.

v. 15b
What you spend your thoughts, time, and money on reveals what you love.

III. The groom desires that his bride's eyes are only for him
(Our Lord desires our <u>Contentment</u>)

James 4:4 - Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

Israel was viewed as married to God (Isaiah 54:5 - "For thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer the Holy one of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called.")

And you belong to God! ("You are not your own . . ." I Cor. 6:19-20).

A believer selfishly living for what he wants is a spiritual adulterer. EX: When we stop looking for satisfaction in <u>our</u> wife and get satisfaction in someone else's wife, this is adultery!

"Friendship" = affectionate love; also means to kiss.

"World" = not physical creation; but <u>world system</u>.

If we are going to build friendships with the unsaved, we will have to do it on their terms--because our terms are "spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2:15) and they are spiritually blind to them.

It breaks God's heart to see His children commit spiritual adultery.

"Enmity" = the opposite of friendship

YOu have an attitude of personal hostility toward God (objective genitive).

You cannot embrace both God and the world. "You cannot serve two masters" - Mt. 6:24.

Your friendship with the world shows:

1. That you do <u>not</u> <u>love God</u>
   "Love not the world . . .the love of the Father
   is not in Him . . ." (I Jn. 2:15).

2.That you are <u>unfaithful</u> to the Savior you claim is your Lord.

3.That you are <u>in agreement</u> with the world's philosophy, practices and goals.

We are "in the world but not of it" (Jn. 17:15)

ILLUS: of a ship sailing in the ocean. "The ship must navigate in the water, but the passengers, crew, cargo, and engines are kept separate from the water. If the ocean gets into the ship, it begins to sink. If the world seeps into the life of a Christian, he is headed for wreckage" (Colson, p. 68).

<u>3 Results</u> of spiritual adultery:

A. YOU MAKE YOURSELF GOD`S ENEMY (v. 4)

"Maketh himself" - You make a <u>deliberate choice</u> to be a friend of the world (no one forced you). But in doing so <u>you</u> become God's enemy! This is why God is not blessing you! Do you expect to get from someone who is your enemy? Not any more than we should be giving arms, etc., to Russia.

B. YOU GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT (v. 5)

Exod. 20:5 - "I . . . am a jealous God."

The Holy Spirit "Lusteth" (yearns; greatly desires your affection) for you with jealousy against all others that would try to steal you away.

God (like a good spouse would be) is unwilling that you share your affections with the world.

God refuses to share you with another. The Holy Spirit, imparted to us by God at conversion, yearns enviously for our total loyalty and devotion to Jesus Christ.

C. YOU FORFEIT GOD'S BLESSINGS (v. 6)

James is saying: God gives a greater grace than the pleasures that the world offers.

But if you will remain proud, God will not give it to you! The proud man says, "I don't need God's grace. I am self-sufficient; I am the standard of excellence; I feel sorry for those of you who need God's grace."

The humble, on the other hand, hold themselves out like empty vessels, saying to God, "Fill me. I want what you offer!"

Hebrews 13:4-5
Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

"Marriage is honorable" - (an implied imperative) i.e. "Let marriage be held in honor"; or "Marriage should be honored."

The word "honorable" means to be treated with value, by all believers.

Marriage is dishonored (devalued) by:

--deliberate unequal yokes (knowingly) (II Cor. 6)
--polygamous marriages
--homosexual/lesbian marriages
--those who live together in an unmarried state (without a legally recognized covenant before God and witnesses)
--divorce
--role reversals (husbands not loving; wives not submitting)
** --Sexual infidelity (in context here)

The gay agenda today is to redefine the word "family."

There is a media mockery of traditional family values regarding marriage in our society today.

"The bed undefiled" - Let the marriage bed be undefiled.
"Bed" = *koite* - sexual intercourse.

There is nothing sinful about sex between a husband and wife in a marriage relationship (SEE: I Cor. 7:2-5)

Sex is an expression of unity between a woman and a man who are indeed one in holy matrimony. All other sexual intercourse is wrong because it is a lie. In fornication or adultery, a oneness is being demonstrated in a relationship between two people who are not really one in the eyes of God.

God hates immorality so much because it violates His purpose, plan, and picture of marriage.
Marriage is a picture of Christ's relationship to His Bride (Eph. 5). No one has a relationship with Christ who is not married to Him!

Parents: Teach your teens about the sanctity of marriage (Start instilling such principles into their minds at a young age!)

Keep your bed undefiled - No one should ever sleep with you other than your spouse. Sex outside of marriage stains and pollutes the heart, soul, and body of the people involved.

"Whoremongers" = fornicators (sexual immorality outside of marriage; primarily used of pre-marital sex).

"Adulterers" = One who is unfaithful to his/her marriage vows (extra-marital sex).

"God will judge" -

1) The judgment is <u>divine</u> - <u>"God"</u> will judge (you should not worry about what people will say or do; your real concern ought to be what God will do!)
2) The judgment is <u>future</u> and <u>certain</u> - ***"will"*** It may not come immediately but it will come eventually!
3) The judgment is <u>severe</u>! Loss of joy, guilt, mental and emotional anguish, frustrations resulting in violent behavior, communicable diseases (such as gonorrhea or AIDS), broken homes, and hell fire for those who practice such lifestyles (I Cor. 6:9-10).

(SEE: Eph. 5:3-6 - Sexual sin shouldn't occur <u>one time</u> in the life of a Christian; God's wrath does come on such)

"Conversation" - way of life; character and conduct; lifestyle.

"Coveteousness" = lit. without an affection for money; no love for money (cp. I Tim. 6:6-10, 17)

"Content" - satisfied; view what you have as enough (food and clothing are all you <u>need</u>!) (I Tim. 6:8)

A greed for money reveals <u>insecurity</u> in a person's life; people treasure wealth because it offers them a false sense of comfort and security for their future.

However, our trust ought to be in God; in the Giver rather than the gifts; in the Supplier rather than the supply; in the Provider rather than the provision!

"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" - A clause often taken out of context; its specific application is to provide a substantial reason why we can be content and free from a love for money.

The reason we don't need to worry about money is because the Provider is never going to leave us! Our security is in Him! He is not a Savior who is "here today and gone tomorrow"! He will never abandon or desert us!

Dt. 31:6 - *"Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee nor forsake thee."*

Psalm 37:28 - *For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off."*

Psalm 118:6 - *The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?"*

IV. The groom desires that his bride cares about pleasing him
(Our Lord desires our Dedication)

2 Corinthians 5:9 - Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

> ***Colossians 1:16 For by him*** [Christ] ***were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:***

"For" - because - giving a reason why Christ is the preeminent "firstborn." (v.15)

Jesus is Creator:

> John 1:3 - "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made."
>
> Eph. 3:9 - "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ."
>
> Heb. 1:2 - "Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds."

Jesus created everything.

1) All beings and things "in heavens and in earth"
2) All that is material and immaterial
3) All laws, governing authorities and powers

"In Heaven" - Jesus created the angelic realm (the host of angels including Michael and Gabriel; the cherubim and seraphim, etc.)

"In earth" - everything from the Swiss Alps to the Islands of Hawaii; every kind of plant, tree, fruit, vegetable; every animal, fish, reptile and insect. And the crown of His creation - mankind - was made by and for Jesus Christ.
No wonder the elements obeyed His voice; and the demons trembled in His presence and respected Him. He is LORD of all, Creator of all!

It does not matter where it is (location); or what it is (essence); or how it is ("the powers that be") -- Jesus made it all.

The powers that be are ordained of God (Rom. 13:1) particularly of Jesus Christ!

When Jesus became man, He worked as a carpenter. A fitting trade for the one who built the universe, and yet what a humble trade. What humiliation for the Creator who spoke the world into existence to work much of his 33 years on earth using the simple tools of man and the elements of His own creation, to construct with.

"By ("dia") Him and for ("eis") him" - Christ is the beginner and benefactor of creation; He is its source and goal. He did it, and is to be glorified by it. He is Creation's author and finisher. He is the architect and owner!

You were created by Jesus and for Jesus.

He made you for Himself; to glorify Him, to live for Him.

"Were created" - perfect tense, meaning that everything that Jesus created in the past, still exists in the present for Him; for His glory and purpose.

“Proving what is acceptable (well-pleasing) unto the Lord”

Ask yourself a Question:

Is God pleased with my. . . conduct,
attitudes,
speech,
dress,
entertainment/amusements, music, TV,
my relationships,
my present service for Him?

Poem: If Jesus Came to Your Home

If Jesus came to your home
to spend a day or two --
If He came unexpectedly,
I wonder what you'd do.

Oh, I know you'd give your nicest room
to such an honored Guest,
And all the food you'd serve Him
would be the very best,
And you would keep assuring Him
you're glad to have Him there --
That serving Him in your home
is joy beyond compare.

But when you see Him coming
would you meet Him at the door
With arms outstretched in welcome
to your Heavenly Visitor?

Or would you have to change your clothes
before you let Him in,
Or hide some magazines,
and put the Bible where they'd been?

Would you turn off the radio
and hope He hadn't heard,
And wish you hadn't uttered
that last, loud, hasty word?

Would you hide your worldly music
and put some hymn books out?
Could you let Jesus walk right in,
or would you rush about?

And I wonder -- if the Savior
spent a day or two with you,
Would you go right on doing
the things you always do?

Would you go right on saying
the things you always say?
Would life for you continue
as it does from day to day?

Would your family conversation
keep its usual pace,
And would you find it hard each meal
to say table grace?

Would you sing the songs you always sing,
and read the books you read,
And let Him know the things
on which your mind and spirit feed?

Would you take Jesus with you
everywhere you planned to go,
Or would you, maybe, change your plans
for just a day or so?

Would you be glad to have Him
meet your very closest friends,
Or would you hope they stay away
until His visit ends?

Would you be glad to have Him
stay forever on and on,
Or would you sigh with great relief
when He at last was gone?

It might be interesting to know the things
that you would do,
If Jesus came in person to spend some time with you.

~Author Unknown~

Conclusion:

- Out of the multitudes, the Savior selected you to be His bride! Are you grateful?
- Doesn't our Groom deserve better than we offer Him?