Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. Gen 2:24

What does it mean to become one flesh? How do two people become one? Is there a process or a method? In the making of plywood, heat, pressure, and glue are applied to multiple layers of thinly cut wood in order to bond them into one piece of plywood. Thereafter, the once-individual pieces cannot be separated without each layer being destroyed. Since marriage is a bonding process, does it require heat and pressure to make it happen? Does each person have to give up something or sacrifice him or herself in the process of becoming one?

Jesus commands you to follow Him in being a servant, losing your life for the sake of the kingdom of God, laying down your life for your friends, and dying to self as a seed dies to bear much fruit. The process of sanctification—of becoming like Jesus, of putting off the old man and putting on the new man—involves all these things, and it doesn’t happen without struggle. Likewise, the process of bonding with your spouse doesn’t happen without at least some struggle, conflict, and resolution.

Understanding your spouse’s heart and needs is a major key in resolving conflict and overcoming other obstacles to bonding. If you don’t understand the essential needs of men and women in general and of your spouse in particular, you are apt to attribute wrong motives to their thoughts, feelings, responses, and actions—thus hampering your oneness.

Scripture tells husbands to live with their wives in an understanding way. (1 Peter 3:7) Whatever else this might mean it at least includes seeing things from her point of view. Men, do you seek to understand and empathize with women and with what they experience in just being female? Because women experience a vast range of things men don’t experience, their perspectives on life necessarily differ from those of men. God designed women to view life differently than men do. If we men don’t take the time to learn, understand, accept, and appreciate this, we will miss good relationships by a mile and not even know why.

Similarly, there are things about men that women must understand, accept, and appreciate. God designed men for the roles they are to play. Traditionally, men are the breadwinners and protectors. It’s a man’s duty to work, to provide for, and to protect his family (1 Tim. 5:8). God has designed men with a certain mindset and approach to life that is different from women—the hunter, the warrior, the solver of problems, the conqueror of nature, and, of course, the football player!

Bonding, therefore, requires both spouses to live with each other in an understanding, empathetic way. Marriage is the act and process of bonding two people together for life. The topic of bonding raises some questions, and in the next few pages, we seek your views on them.

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1 Women, of course, nowadays often experience the stress of obtaining jobs and of filling the provider role. Society changed dramatically in the 1960’s. Before that time, it was generally not as necessary, nor was it expected, for women (especially mothers) to work outside the home.
1. What Old Testament scripture does Jesus quote in Matthew 19:5? __________________________
   What does that tell you about His view of the book and its author? __________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________

2. What does Genesis 2:23 say to you about what God intends for the general relationship between all men and women? _________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________

3. What does Matthew 19:6 tell you about Jesus’ view of marriage? __________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________

4. In light of Genesis 2:23 and 1 Pet 3:7, how should a husband look upon and treat his wife?
   ___________________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________

   How should a wife look upon and treat her husband? _________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________

5. How did sin affect the relationship between Adam and Eve? (Gen. 3:1-24) ________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________
6. How has sin affected the general relationship between all men and women? ____________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________

7. How has sin influenced your attitudes, behavior, and general relationship with the opposite gender? ____________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________

8. How has sin affected your attitudes, behavior, and relationship with your fiancé(e)? ________________

_________________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________

9. Genesis 2:24 specifically states that the man is to leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife. What does that say about the man’s responsibility and role? ____________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________

10. What does God mean when He says “one flesh”? (Gen. 2:24) ______________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________

11. How is it that God does the joining—how is marriage God’s deal—if we (you) do the choosing either to marry or not to marry? ____________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________

12. What does Jesus mean “What, therefore God has joined together, let not man separate”? (Matt 19:6). ____________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________


_________________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________

14. What does 1 Cor 7:10-11 say about divorce? ____________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________
15. Does each person lose something in the process of becoming one? ____________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

If so, what do they gain? __________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

16. Does bonding mean that you hold nothing of yourself back? Explain._________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

17. What are the differences between a couple who live together and/or are being sexually involved and a
couple who marry? ______________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

18. Since marriage is only for this life, why go through all the fuss—the headache, pain, sorrow, care, and
concern—of bonding to become one flesh? One of you might die in the middle of raising a family.
Why, then, put your heart out there for such a tenuous thing? Why put your whole self into it? It’s
like the lyrics of a song once popular, “Who needs a heart when a heart can be broken?” 2 Comment.
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

19. Would you be incomplete without this person? _____ Do you need a mate in order to be or feel
complete? _____

20. Some people, although married for many years, have never bonded. Why do you suppose that is?
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________