

The Honor of Marriage

Dr. David Shaw

Hebrews 13:4

Let marriage be held in honor among all.

1. The Admonition

The word for “honor” more commonly means precious in the New Testament. It is the word used in 1 Corinthians 3:12 where Paul speaks of gold, silver, and precious stone. It is used in 1 Peter 1:19 in reference to the “precious blood” of Jesus. It is used in 2 Peter 1:4 to refer to the “precious and very great promises of God.

So when Hebrews 13:4 says, “Let marriage be held in honor among all,” we should hear the ring of preciousness. The Bible is telling us: *Make sure that your thoughts of marriage are precious. Let it be treasured like gold and silver and rare jewels. Let it be revered and respected like the noblest, most virtuous person you have ever known. In the eyes of God, marriage is precious.*

2. The Context

In order to get the proper understanding of what God means when He tells us to HONOR MARRIAGE, we must look at the context.

Verse 1 says: “Let brotherly love continue.” Keep on loving Christians. Build a deep affection and fellowship for each other.

Verse 2 says: “Show hospitality.” Don’t just love Christians, but love strangers as well.

Verse 3 says: “Love prisoners and those being miss-treated.”

Then comes verse 4: Honor marriage. Verse 5 says “Don’t love money,” followed by the liberating promises that God will never leave you or forsake you.

The reason the context is so important is that the command to “honor marriage” comes right in the middle of love Christians, love strangers, love prisoners, love the hurting, don’t love money, and trust God to take care of you. Why is that significant? Honor marriage is like loving Christians. Honoring marriage is like loving strangers. Honoring marriage is like loving prisoners. **ALL THESE THINGS TAKE FAITH AND CAN ONLY BE DONE BY TRUSTING THE FAITHFUL GOD.**

3. Application

- A. God is not a killjoy but hates what kills joy. We have not yet commented on what God says about “keeping the marriage bed pure.” The second half of the verse says: “Let the marriage bed be undefiled; for God will judge the immoral and the adulterous.” The word translated “Immoral” means those who commit fornication in distinction to adultery.

Both are a dishonor to marriage and a defiling of the marriage bed, because God made marriage and marriage alone, as the one safe and holy and ultimately joyful place for sexual relations.

- B. Live out forgiveness and joy and hope. We honor marriage when we live out the clean and happy future of our unclean and forgiven past. The text says “God will judge fornicators and adulterers.” Just like 1 Corinthians 6:9,10 says that “fornicators and adulterers will not inherit the kingdom of God,” but the very next verse says “and such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.” It is much the same truth as is found in Hebrews 10:12-13 which says “When Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins (even fornication and adultery), He sat down at the right hand of God, then to wait until His enemies should be made a footstool for His feet.” Christians live in light of the cross.
- 1. Remember and practice God’s purpose. God created marriage to be a living drama of the loving relationship between Christ and His bride (Ephesians 5). The people that honor this intention best are the people that live out the very forgiveness and cleanness and joy that God designed marriage to portray.