

At milepost 334 of the Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina is a resort community called Little Switzerland. Since the construction of the Switzerland Inn in 1910, Little Switzerland has attracted tourists by emphasizing any approximate resemblance to the real Switzerland. Visitors can stay in lodges, inns, and chalets, all modeled after Swiss architecture. Swiss styled souvenirs fill the Switzerland General Store and the Little Switzerland Trading Company. The shopping strip includes a boutique, a gallery, and a bakery with an extra “P” and “E” at the end of its name to give it the exotic sound of The Swiss Shoppe. Little Switzerland has outdoor adventures featuring mines, waterfalls, hikes, and viewpoints. There is an Artisan League for artists of all mediums. And the Swiss influence is featured in the dining options.

The resort has used Switzerland to market itself well. But the most accurate comparison to Switzerland is exposed in the first word, “little”. Switzerland is a country that is home to nearly 9 million people. Little Switzerland has 111 residents with an average age of 77. Switzerland covers nearly 16,000 square miles. Little Switzerland is marked by a single milepost on a scenic highway. Little Switzerland is indeed in a scenic mountain setting. It sits at 3,500 feet in elevation with sweeping view of the Blue Ridge Mountains including views of Mount Mitchell, the highest peak in North Carolina at 6,684 feet tall. Switzerland has the Matterhorn. It’s summits don’t look like anything like what you would find in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Their highest peaks reach above 15,000 feet. The Alps cover 65% of the country. There are 82 peaks in the Alps that reach 4000-meters (13,123 feet) or higher. Of the 82, 48 of them are in Switzerland and nearly all of them are within 15 miles of its border. Nearly half of the glaciers in the Alps are in Switzerland. The country has 38,000 miles of trails. Nobody should mistake the Blue Ridge for the Alps.

Little Switzerland is more “little” than “Switzerland”. But I want to speak in defense of the resort town. They should feel no guilt when they push the Switzerland theme in their marketing. Sure, it is not Switzerland, but do you know what it is? It is the closest thing that you can find to Switzerland in North Carolina.

The first page of the book, *The Adventist Home*, refers to the home as a little heaven. Are we frauds to give a home such a boastful title? Heaven enjoys sinless perfection. Homes aren’t perfect. In heaven, we will live forever. In our homes, we are always adjusting to change and loss. Heaven sparkles and our homes are messy. Our homes are more “little” than they are “heaven”. Our homes are not heaven, but do you know what they can be? Just like milepost 334 is the closest thing to Switzerland that can be found in North Carolina, a Spirit-filled home is the closest thing to heaven that can be found on this earth. Even more than a church family or a stunning landscape, the relationships within the home are designed to model heavenly relationships. ***This world is not our home, but your home can be a little heaven.***

This is the truth what will serve as the lens for our study of the doctrine of Marriage and the Family. We are going to focus on the marriage relationship. We will consider, from Ephesians 5, *six characteristics of marriage that will make your home a little heaven.*

Before we strive to make our home a little heaven, we must admit that this world is not our home. In this world, homes get messy. With everything from the dirty dishes on the counter to the destructive dynamics in our relationships. Home may not be a safe or happy place for you. When we speak of the home as a little heaven, we are not ignoring the mess. This world is not our home. Don't receive this message with shame for how your home relationships don't measure up. But let it speak to the potential that you can aim for.

For so many reasons, marriage is a topic that should be addressed with sensitivity. As you hear this message you may be single, divorced or struggling in an unhealthy marriage. Some of you have lost a spouse to death. Some listening to this message are homosexual or same sex attracted. Some are far too young to get married. How do you apply this message? Singles, don't apply this message by getting engaged next week. The application of this message is not to change your marriage status, but to elevate your view of marriage. If marriage was in your past, this message will help you process what it was. If you are currently married, this message will call you to a higher standard. If marriage is in your future, this message will set a standard to be pursued. If you never marry, still this message will give a picture of the love of Christ for the Church.

The home as a little heaven is reflected in our church's doctrinal statement.

Fundamental Belief #23: Marriage and Family

Marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus to be a lifelong union between a man and a woman in loving companionship. For the Christian a marriage commitment is to God as well as to the spouse, and should be entered into only between a man and a woman who share a common faith. Mutual love, honor, respect, and responsibility are the fabric of this relationship, which is to reflect the love, sanctity, closeness, and permanence of the relationship between Christ and His church. Regarding divorce, Jesus taught that the person who divorces a spouse, except for fornication, and marries another, commits adultery. Although some family relationships may fall short of the ideal, a man and a woman who fully commit themselves to each other in Christ through marriage may achieve loving unity through the guidance of the Spirit and the nurture of the church. God blesses the family and intends that its members shall assist each other toward complete maturity. Increasing family closeness is one of the earmarks of the final gospel message. Parents are to bring up their children to love and obey the Lord. By their example and their words they are to teach them that Christ is a loving, tender, and caring guide who wants them to become members of His body, the family of God which embraces both single and married persons. (Gen. 2:18-25; Exod. 20:12; Deut. 6:5-9; Prov. 22:6; Mal. 4:5, 6; Matt. 5:31, 32; 19:3-9, 12; Mark 10:11, 12; John 2:1-11; 1 Cor. 7:7, 10, 11; 2 Cor. 6:14; Eph. 5:21-33; 6:1-4.)

Home Relationships Other Than Marriage

This study will focus mainly on the marriage relationship as taught in Ephesians 5:21-33, but if we took the time in Scripture, we would see that the home relationships of parents and children and siblings are also designed to be little heavens. I recommend the book that I referred to in the introduction, *The Adventist Home*. Here are just a few power quotations that move me to make my home a little heaven.

- “Society is composed of families, and is what the heads of families make it. Out of the heart are “the issues of life”; and the heart of the community, of the church, and of the nation is the household. The well-being of society, the success of the church, the prosperity of the nation, depend upon home influences.” (p.15- 1st paragraph of the book)
- “Home must not lack sunshine. The home feeling should be kept alive in the hearts of the children, that they may look back upon the home of their childhood as a place of peace and happiness next to heaven.” (p. 21)
- “One well-ordered, well-disciplined family tells more in behalf of Christianity than all the sermons that can be preached.” (p. 32)
- “The happiness of families and churches depends upon home influences. Eternal interests depend upon the proper discharge of the duties of this life. The world is not so much in need of great minds as of good men who will be a blessing in their homes.” (p. 37).

This world is not our home, but your home can be a little heaven.

Six Characteristics of Marriage That Will Make Your Home a Little Heaven (from Ephesians 5)

1. Marriage is Others-Centered

Ephesians 5:21- submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Our main problem is self-centeredness. God calls us to submit to one another. Your marriage can be a little heaven when you live others-centered.

Ephesians 5 is a rousing call to spirit-filled living with admonitions to “live as imitators of God” (v.1), “walk in love” (v.2), “wake up” (v.14), “make the best use of time” (v.16), and “be filled with the Spirit” (v.19). The call to be filled with the Spirit includes having a Spirit-filled marriage.

Verse 21 is the topic sentence for the rest of the chapter and the beginning of the next. Submission is the topic and the subheadings are wives submitting to husbands, children submitting to parents and servants submitting to masters.

This text will teach that the husband is the head and it will call the wife to submit to him, but first, it calls both to mutual submission. We all think that the other persons self-centeredness is worse than ours. Progress happens when two people see their self-centeredness as the main problem and both put the other first.

Notice the mutuality in Paul's teaching on marriage in 1 Corinthians 7.

1 Corinthians 7:3-5 The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise, the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.

Most of Paul's instruction in Ephesians 5 is directed toward husbands. There are remarkable standards of other-centeredness given to the men that would bless marriage if practiced by either husbands or wives.

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

The first example of Christ-like love is to give yourself. Marriage beats us up when we enter it to be served. Godless society calls it "love" when they have the experience of getting what pleases them. God call us to express love by giving. Other-centeredness is eager to give.

Ephesians 5:28-30 In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body.

The call to love yourself as you love your own body is an extreme call to other-centeredness. Now you might not be proud of your body shape or struggle with pride and vanity. You may not spend a lot of money at the hair salon or buy expensive clothes or get regular massages. But you do love your body.

When we were on our hiking trip, we ate differently than we do at home. The food was dehydrated and carefully measured. We had some 10 day stretches between resupplies. That means you either carry a ridiculous amount of weight or you get picky about what kind of food you have and how much you have of it. When you are out there, you lick your bowl clean. You feel guilt when you spill. You think about food for hours. Foods that you would have to force yourself to eat at home undergo a transformation on the trail. Almost everything tastes amazing out there.

We did well with our food preparation. But there was one section that we didn't carry enough. We started rationing. We were using a lot of calories, and our big meals were served in a 2-cup bowl without seconds. We did our best to keep good attitudes. But after a few days of being hungry, every conversation is about food. Our bodies felt it. When we came across berries, we picked them. We did not allow each other to be wasteful. My daughter made up a song about people starving on the PCT. Some people took pity on us and gave us food. And when we got to Snoqualmie Pass, we had plans to eat. We went to the café and shared a burrito. We plundered the hiker box at the hotel we checked into. And since we could not get into our room yet, we

went and got a pizza. For two days we ate as much as we could. Why did we respond like this? Because we love our bodies.

We did not have to tell ourselves to be hungry, our bodies told us. We did not have to force ourselves to eat, our hunger compelled us. We have sensors and nerve endings that tell us what our body needs. Then we do what we can to meet the need because we love our bodies.

You like to wear comfy clothes. You like good food. You like warm showers. If you are physically miserable you do something about it. If you can do anything to help it, you don't let yourself get so cold that you get frostbite, you don't let yourself starve, you don't let yourself endure unnecessary pain. You have these nerve endings all over that tell you to do something about this, don't just let it suffer.

We need nerve endings for our spouse. We need to love them in a way that when they hurt, we feel it. When they have a need, we desire to meet it. We need to love them like our own bodies.

The phrase that is translated "Nourishes and cherishes it" literally means "to keep warm". The image is to warm someone up with your body heat, to cuddle, to revive their health. In a frigid world you are not willing to leave your spouse to shiver. You press your whole being up against them because you love them as you love your own body.

This world is not our home, but your home can be a little heaven when your marriage is others-centered.

2. Marriage is Christ-Saturated

Ephesians 5:21 "submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ".

Christ is the power of marriage. In last week's message we focused on the principle that all things should be done from God, through God and for God. That applies to marriage. It is reverence for Christ that fuels the submission to each other. There are non-believers that enjoy good marriages. But if Christ is not in it, it will never be a little heaven.

The home as a little heaven is not just an inspirational thought but it is the design of God. Notice from Ephesians 5:21-33 how marriage is designed to model heavenly relationships.

- 5:24 "Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should..."
- 5:25 "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church."
- 5:32 "This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church."

Home relationships represent heavenly relationships to such a degree that after 10 verses of teaching about the marriage relationship, Paul reveals that he is actually talking about Christ and the church but that the relationship model is so similar that his writing applies to both (see verses 32-33). The best descriptor of marriage and family relationships is “Christlike”. He teaches us about our relationship with him through our relationship with our spouse.

This world is not our home, but your home can be a little heaven when your marriage is Christlike.

3. Marriage is Complementary

In this case, “complementary” is code for “controversial”. The text introduces gender roles within marriage when it calls wives to “submit” to their husbands as “head”. From the beginning, I want to affirm gender distinctions and marriage roles as a glorious design of God. We also must acknowledge the distortions of these distinctions that have been promoted by some through male headship theology. You can do a lot of damage preaching about gender roles in marriage. Gender distinctions have been weaponized, ignored, and sugar-coated. I wish to elevate them as a glorious design of God.

Gender distinctions are not about superiority, subjugation, dominance, or control. They are about leadership, love, completion, and harmony.

Ephesians 5:22-25 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.

Ephesians 5:33 However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

Husbands and wives are **equal** but **not equivalent**. There is no hierarchy of value in the marriage but men and women are not interchangeable.

God affirms our equality.

Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Adventist home 25.3- Eve was created from a rib taken from the side of Adam, signifying that she was not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal, to be loved and protected by him. A part of man, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, she was his second self; showing the close union and the affectionate attachment that should exist in this relation.

God affirms distinction. Here's the big secret about men and women, we are different. The differences are more than biological. We are created with design deficits. God intended for us to have lacks that are met in relationship, especially in a marriage relationship. God calls husbands the head and wives the body. He commands husbands to love and wives to submit and respect. Notice the complementary dynamic of this relationship. Man is the head and woman is the body. Some marriages are chaotic because we have tried to make it into a two headed monster. The head is not much without the body nor is the body much without the head. The image is not of superiority but of unity, mutual need, distinction and completion. Heads and bodies are essentially complementary. There are other body parts that can be amputated without loss of life. But the head and the body cannot separate without death. Our need for the other is not a design flaw but a design feature. God thinks it is better this way. These design defects do not mean that single people are doomed to live incomplete. God gives a gift to some to live fulfilling lives as a single person. He is ultimately what completes us. For some, he does that completing through a spouse.

The description of how to love in verses 25-30 defines what it means to be head. The command to the head is to love, not to control, not to demand, not to overpower, not to minimize, but to love. And the standard of that love is the highest it could possibly be. It is to love as Christ loved the church. No wife will struggle to submit to and respect a husband who loves like Christ. To be the head includes leadership, authority, initiative, and responsibility. For Christ loved the church in these ways.

When Adam and Eve fell, Adam blamed Eve, but God held Adam accountable.

Genesis 3:8-9 And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord ***God called to the man*** and said to him, "Where are you?"

The woman was hiding too but God looked to the man, as the head, to answer for their sin.

Authority does not carry romantic connotations but when we consider how Christ expressed his authority, we see that we need more of that from husbands. Christ's authority was used to serve.

John 13:3-5 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands [***authority***], and that he had come from God and was going back to God, rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him [***service***].

Men, take the lead in spiritual things. Initiate family worship, devotions, prayer, and church attendance. Take the lead in confessing sin and repenting. Encourage the things that make your wife come alive. To a godly man, a submissive wife is not an opportunity to exploit but a

responsibility to steward. Being the head is not about receiving but giving, not about being served but serving.

Peter gives us his perspective on how a husband should lead.

1 Peter 3:7

Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

When he says, “an understanding way” it literally means deal with them according to knowledge. You might say, “I can provide for her, and I can sacrifice for her, but I won’t ever be able to understand her”. And yes, we don’t understand anyone perfectly. But it is your responsibility to try to be understanding. To listen, to be informed, to learn. Being a head means we strive for empathy.

The text mentions that they are the weaker vessel. What do you do when they are weaker? Dominate them? No. Their weakness is reason to show honor.

The text affirms our equality as co-heirs.

This world is not our home, but your home can be a little heaven when you love your wife.

The wives are given two commands: Submit (v23) & Respect (v33). Sometimes God gives a sign to help me with a sermon. This week while I was driving I saw a sign. It was in the back window of a car. I had been preparing this message and studying this verse when I saw the sign in that rear window that said, “I RESPECT my husband. Ephesians 5:33”. I had never seen that sign before. It struck me as entirely counter cultural. I would have been less surprised to see a stick figure peeing on the word “marriage” than to see a sign saying, “I respect my husband”. Submitting and respecting husbands is not seen as a strong way to be a woman in our culture, but it is strong in God’s eyes.

I wish to elevate the idea of submitting from the image you might have in mind of a weak, cowering, passive, and powerless woman to a woman of strength and integrity. Submission and respect is a main way that wives show love to their husbands.

Some points of clarity regarding submission:

1. **Submission is to your husband** (v22, 1 Peter 3:1) The Bible doesn’t command women to submit to men in general but to submit to husbands. It’s not because he is a man, but because he is your man.
2. **Submission is as to the Lord** (v22) We do all of this out of reverence for Christ. Your husband is not your God. We are told that godly women reserve their hope for God (1 Peter 3:15).

3. **Submission includes being the body (v23)** You are an essential part of the relationship. You bring something irreplaceable.
4. **Submission includes receiving love (v25), sacrifice (v25), nourishment and cherishing (v29)**
5. **Submission is fitting to the Lord (Col. 3:18-19)**
6. **Submission is appropriate even to unbelieving husbands (1 Peter 3:1)**
7. **Submission does not mean complete agreement (1 Peter 3:1).** Submission does not mean that you let your husband tell you what to think. You are independent in your beliefs and do not offer your brain over to be controlled.
8. **Submission includes making efforts to change your husband (1 Peter 3:1, 1 Cor. 7:14)**
The wife has influence that the husband holds.
9. **Submission is characterized by pure and respectful conduct (v. 33, 1 Peter 3:2)**
10. **Submission is fearless (1 Peter 3:6)** Submission is a life of freedom (1 Peter 2:16). If submission was to accept abuse that would not be fearless or free.

Please hear this, do not think that submission means to put yourself in an unsafe situation. If you are in a marriage situation that is abusive you need to get to a safe place. There is a lot of sacrifice in marriage. But abuse is never a sacrifice that God asks you to make. I will share a lot of things in this message that you should not apply to your situation if it is an abusive one.

Women, you are created to be beautiful, to be a suitable helper, to complement man, to be strong, nurturing, creative, and smart. You are sensitive, tactful, and gentle. There is nothing shameful about the gender that God designed. And you are called to shine in a way men can't.

In the complementary admonitions of marriage, we inherently see that it is limited to a man and a woman. The Biblical definition of marriage does not include homosexuality unions. Men and women are designed to complement each other in marriage.

Marriage is complementary. Biologically we need both genders, or our species goes extinct. Listen to how Paul describes how each gender needs the other.

1 Corinthians 11:11 Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God.

This world is not our home, but your home can be a little heaven when husbands and wives complement each other through their God-designed distinctions.

4. Marriage is Purifying

Ephesians 5:26-27 That he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

The goal of marriage is the sanctification of your spouse. The end goal is not to get to 25 years, or 50 or even until death do us part. There is a higher aim. The end goal is to present your spouse faultless before the throne of God.

All of marriage is a preparation for the second coming of Jesus. When we think of big moments in a marriage we think of the wedding, the honeymoon, the anniversaries, and the birth of children. Let me describe the biggest moment possible for any marriage. The Lord himself will descend from heaven with the voice of the archangel and the trumpet call of God and the dead in Christ will rise first and then we who are alive and remain will be caught up in the clouds together to meet the Lord in the air. Your first impulse will be to look to Jesus and worship. Your second impulse will be to find your spouse. And they will be looking for you. You will grab hands and bring each other to Jesus. You will say, "Look she's here", "he's here". We will testify that the one the Lord entrusted us with has been purified and is presented without blemish. You have had a part in preparing them as the bride of Christ. In their salvation, a great calling on your life is achieved.

Listen, marriage is hard. This world is not our home. Both you and your spouse need some refining. God has given you to each other to help in that process. Your spouse's faults are not grounds for separation but a training ground for sanctification. Marriage is not a human institution for your happiness but a creation of God for your holiness.

Marriage doesn't so much create the problems as it reveals them, like a hurricane finds the weak points of a house. By yourself your selfishness could go undetected without much consequence. In marriage it gets called out. There is friction and the friction is useful in your maturity. How would you learn patience if you spouse did nothing to annoy you? How would you develop unconditional love if your spouse met every condition of your ideal relationship?

We are not simply stuck with our spouse problems. God has a use for those problems. The imperfections and incompatibilities have a place in God's plan for growing you.

This world is not our home, but your home can be a little heaven when you seek the spiritual purity of your spouse.

5. Marriage is Committed

Ephesians 5:31 "Therefore a man shall **leave** his father and mother and **hold fast** to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."

I get the teaching of commitment from the word's "leave" and "hold fast" or "cleave". Leaving takes commitment. It means that your marriage has the top priority in your life. You are willing to leave all else. Cleaving takes commitment. It means you will not let go. Marriages are destroyed because of leaving problems and cleaving problems. We have leaving problems when we are tied to our parents financially or emotionally, when our past controls how we engage in marriage, or when our work gets priority over our marriage. Leaving means that we have made our marriage the highest priority and most important relationship that we have. We have cleaving problems when we lose interest after old age or when difficulties make us want to quit. It takes commitment to leave and cleave.

Michael Bolton sings a song that declares, "When a man loves a woman, Can't keep his mind on nothin' else, He'd trade the world, For a good thing he's found." He would trade the world. That is the kind of priority it is to have in our lives.

The most important part of a wedding is not the dress or the cake or the venue. It's the vows. More than marriage is romance, it is commitment.

Love is often portrayed as a ditch; you fall into it. Or a tornado; you get swept up in it. Or a virus; you catch it. It is much more a decision; you choose it. My wife has often said, "choose your love, love your choice".

We have already discussed that a difference between the Biblical understanding of love and the cultural norm of love is that love is about giving not taking. Another difference is that love is primarily an action not a feeling. Society says it is a feeling. That is self-centered. It is what it does to me. The Bible says it is primarily an action. It is what I do toward others. The relational dynamic that works for all of us is that the feeling of love follows the actions of love. Parents love their adult children even if they are absolutely obnoxious and chronically unemployed. It is because when you perform loving actions toward anyone you will eventually come to have loving feelings toward them.

Marriage is hard. Sometimes it is so hard that the only part of this verse that makes any sense is the line that confesses, "this is a profound mystery". When it is hard, romance will not keep you faithful, commitment will.

A few years back on our 8th wedding anniversary, my wife said, "So after 8 years, if you could go back and choose all over again would you.." then she stopped and said, "never mind that is a bad question." I know what she was going to say, "would you marry me again if you could go back and choose". That is a bad question, not just a bad question to answer but even to consider. You can't go back, and you shouldn't even think about it. Some might say, "that all sounds good but you see, I think I married the wrong woman. I was young and foolish. So, it is really hard to do these things because I didn't choose well, we aren't very compatible." You may have married the wrong one, but she is the right one now, because you married her. You may have been foolish, but God has sanctified your union, and you are one flesh. Don't even let yourself think thoughts of it being wrong. It is now your God given calling to love your spouse.

Physical attraction is not commitment. I heard Timothy Keller preach it this way, “Christ didn’t look down from the cross and say, ‘Just my body type’”. We look to the most superficial things when we consider a partner. But it is commitment, not excitement, that will keep you together.

This world is not our home, but your home can be a little heaven when there is commitment.

6. Marriage is Intimate

Ephesians 6:31- “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”

There is no closer union than two becoming one. Marriage is friendship, companionship, and the greatest possible intimacy. The one flesh union is mysterious. The text admits it. But it is not wholly figurative. There is a real sense in which God unites your being.

Verse 31 is a quotation from Genesis 2:24. The verse just before it fills in the story.

Genesis 2:21-23 So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²² And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³ Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.”

Woman was literally created from the flesh of her future husband. God can create however he wants. He can speak or spit or snort or sculpt. But he designs a one flesh union by creating woman from man's flesh. Then Adam wakes up and says basically, “wow, this is me but she is not me. She was taken from me but she was made for me.” Distinct, yet sharing one flesh.

There is also a verse at the end of the chapter that was not quoted.

Genesis 2:25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

To be naked and unashamed is to be weird. And in most contexts, inappropriate. Something is wrong with you if you are comfortable with your clothes off around people. But this relationship is so close that you are naked and unashamed. Marriage calls us to be naked and unashamed in every sense, physically, spiritually, and emotionally. This one flesh union is why God tells us not to have sex outside of marriage. It is not safe to be naked physically with someone whom you have not

become naked with spiritually and emotionally. Marriage is the most intimate of human relationships.

This world is not our home, but your home can be a little heaven when there is intimacy.

No, you are not going to see the Matterhorn from Little Switzerland. But even as a very **Little** Switzerland, it offers something special. The Switzerland Inn was recognized by Tripadvisor with the Travelers Choice award in 2023. It has a 4.5-star rating. In the reviews you will find glowing affirmations like, “The food, ambience and service were outstanding!” and “This inn is right off the Blue Ridge Parkway making it an ideal location for travelers.”. Really? An ideal location? But its views are tiny in comparison to the Alps. Little Switzerland is enjoyed, not because it fully measures up to Switzerland, but because in some small ways, the attractions of Switzerland are available there. The travelers that give Little Switzerland good reviews are not focused on how far it falls short. They simply enjoy the good things offered there.

Our homes will fall short. This world is not our home. Don’t measure the success of your marriage by how superior Christ is at loving. Treasure those ways that the love of Christ is reflected in your marriage. It will not be on the scale of heaven, but it can share some of the features. No, we are not perfect, but even a little bit of heaven is a welcomed thing on this earth. Seek for your marriage and home to be a blessing. ***This world is not our home, but your home can be a little heaven.***