

# Preferring Others Regardless of the Cost

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1. Paul arrived at Caesarea where he found Philip, one of the seven deacons who had been chosen by the Jerusalem church twenty years earlier (v. 8). Philip had apparently settled in Caesarea, a predominately Gentile city. He now had four daughters who were prophetesses (v. 9).
    - a. A man named Agabus came down to Caesarea (about 65 miles) and tried to convince Paul not to go up to Jerusalem (v. 12). Although Paul was still prepared to go to Jerusalem to personally deliver the financial gift from the churches of Macedonia, Achaia and Asia Minor. Who became convinced that he should not go (v. 10-12)?
    - b. What did Paul say in response to their appeal to not go to Jerusalem (Acts 21:13)?
    - c. How did the people interpret Paul's determination to go to Jerusalem at all costs (v. 14)?
  
  2. Paul's company arrived in Jerusalem at the end of the third missionary journey where the brethren received them gladly. On the following day Paul met with James and the other leaders of the Jerusalem church and likely presented the financial gift that had been collected by the churches (Acts 24:17; note: James, the half-brother of Christ, was apparently still the spiritual leader of the Jerusalem congregation (Gal. 2:9-12).
    - a. Paul gave the spiritual leaders in Jerusalem an updated ministry report (v. 19). When they heard his report they began to glorify God (v. 20). What did Paul emphasize in his testimony that made them respond this way (Acts 21:19)?
    - b. When you give a testimony in a church service, to another Christian, or even to an unsaved person, are you careful to emphasize what God did rather than bringing glory to yourself?
  
  3. The Judean brethren were glad to see Paul and they must have been grateful to receive the financial gift as well (v. 17). Nevertheless, they were concerned about his safety. What group did they think might cause problems for Paul (v. 20,21)?
  
  4. The Jerusalem leaders recommended a plan to Paul to avoid conflict with these potential protagonists.
    - a. What was their plan (v. 23,24)?
    - b. Did their plan go too far (i.e., a theological compromise leading to sin) in an attempt to avoid trouble with the Jews (v. 23-26)?
  
  5. There are several similarities between this riot in Jerusalem and the previous riot that occurred in Ephesus a few years earlier. Name at least three (Acts 19:28-41; 21:27-36).
  
  6. Paul was rescued from the angry mob by some Roman soldiers who mistook him for an Egyptian insurrectionist and self-proclaimed prophet who had led a revolutionary army known as the Assassins (v. 33-38). According to Josephus, an early church historian, this man came to the Mount of Olives in 54 AD, promising his adherents that the walls of Jerusalem would collapse at his command. The Roman army marched on them and killed many before the remaining 4000 escaped into the wilderness (v. 37,38). When the Roman soldiers led Paul to the steps of the Antonio Fortress, which was located on the northwest corner of the Temple in Jerusalem, he asked to speak to the crowd (v. 34-40).
    - a. What did Paul say to convince the Romans to let him speak to the people and what did he do to quiet the people so he could speak to them (v. 39,40)?
    - b. What motivated Paul to share the gospel with this violent mob?
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## Read: Genesis 2:1-25

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### Monday

v. 1-7 — Genesis 1:31 says that everything God made was “very good.” Chapter 1 is an overview of creation and chapter 2 is the detailed account of God’s creation of man and the institution of marriage (v. 4). It is important to note that God gave us marriage before the fall, before the curse of sin. Marriage is pure; marriage was given while Adam & Eve were still holy.

### Tuesday

v. 8-15 — *A wonderful home*: God planted a special garden for Adam to tend. This garden would become the home of the first newlyweds. Eden has often been called “Paradise”; from the biblical accounts of it, Eden sounds simply beautiful. What is your home like? Is it like Paradise? an oasis from the cares and wickedness of the world? Or is it filled with strife, or just a cold place to live? That is not the way God intended a Christian home to be. By His grace, your marriage can be much like Eden. If you need help building a biblical marriage, call the church or come in and see me this week.

### Wednesday

v. 15-17 — God gave Adam a wonderful home and a great job. Adam was to tend the Garden of Eden and to be sure that neither he nor anyone else ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. I don’t know about you, but I am filled with dread when I read verse 17. Adam failed in his responsibility as a husband: he obviously told Eve about God’s command (3:3), but he did not lead his wife in a proper understanding of Who God is, and how to follow Him. Men, how are you doing as the spiritual leader of your home? It is your responsibility to see to the spiritual health of your family. Commit before God to take up that responsibility, be the leader that God wants you to be.

### Thursday

v. 18-20 — *A helper*: God made man with a fundamental need; what is that (v. 18)? Notice that none of the animals God made were compatible for Adam. What does God call the woman (v. 18b; 21b)? God made man with a need for fellowship—we need fellowship with God but we also need fellowship with others. God filled that need by making a “comparable helper”: Eve. Marriage is God’s gift to mankind; do you see it as such? As Christians, we should have a high view of marriage and we should thank God for the spouse He has graciously given. Take time this week to tell your spouse how thankful you are that God placed you together.

### Friday

v. 21-25 — Do you remember your wedding vows? When God presented Eve to Adam, Adam was amazed; the dog was no longer man’s best friend. In verse 24, God says that man will leave his father and mother and be “joined” to his wife. Marriage is a “one flesh” relationship. This relationship goes far beyond anything physical; it is a knitting together of souls that only God can do. Husbands and wives must leave their parents and knit their lives together with one another. Do you remember the vows you made before God on your wedding day? Today would be a good day to reflect on those vows. Have you broken them? Commit afresh to love, honor and cherish your spouse.

### Saturday

What does marriage illustrate? Marriage is a grand illustration. Look up the following verses and note what God says about marriage: Isaiah 54:5; 62:4,5; Jeremiah 3:1; Hosea 2:16-20; Matthew 9:15; John 3:29; II Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:23-24, 32; Revelation 19:7; 21:2, 9; 22:17. Understanding God’s view of marriage and what it illustrates should give us a renewed appreciation and awe of this institution. Let’s commit together to uphold the sanctity of marriage in the midst of this dark and irreverent world.

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