

## Marital Relations

How is your marriage relationship? A marriage requires a man and a woman. A good marriage requires a good man and a good woman. Mary and Joseph must have had a good marriage. Their marriage was made in heaven. Ancient Jewish communities employed match-makers to find suitable marriage partners for people of marrying age. They did not always do a good job, however. The on-going controversy during the time of Christ between the schools of Hillel and Shammai about the rules of divorce suggest that not every marriage was a happy one, even in Bible times.<sup>1</sup> God, however, was the match-maker for Mary and Joseph.

“Joseph [was] the husband of Mary.”<sup>2</sup> The genealogy of Matthew shows that Joseph could trace his ancestry back to Abraham. He was also of the royal line of David. His claim to fame, however, was in that he married Mary. Never was there a better marriage than this. Yet even this marriage, had serious troubles and almost fell apart. The thing that saved it was the very thing that started it, the Word of God.

Both had their ears tuned toward heaven. “Fear not” God said “to take unto thee Mary.” And Joseph “...did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him.” When Mary was “troubled” the angel said “Fear not” and told her about Jesus, “that holy thing which shall be born of thee.” The incarnation is so enormous and the virgin birth so fantastic, that few would even give a thought to this marriage, let alone an obscure figure like Joseph, but we should. Look at this special couple and their “relationship,” as people would say today. In this marriage, “relationship” was everything. Not their relationship with each other, not their relationship with Abraham or David, what is important in this story is their relationship with Jesus. Without Jesus, there would be no story. Without Jesus there would be no glory. Without Jesus, there would be no joy.<sup>3</sup>

Where is God in your story? Where is God in your marriage? Matthew begins with a list. “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ...” The word generation in the Greek original is interesting to see. It is *Genesis*. Every marriage relationship can experience a new Genesis with Jesus.

<sup>1</sup> The Controversy was over the interpretation of Deut. 24:1-4 and especially the words ‘*erwath dabhar*. Did it mean only unchaste and immoral, or did it also include other failures- even failing to “live up to expectations?” It is interesting how modern Christian’s, who boast of being “free” from Moses and the law when it comes to tithing and such things, rush to hide behind his skirts when it comes to justifying divorce.” Marriages in trouble would be better served if we looked less for *law* and more for *love*.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 1:16

<sup>3</sup> Luke 2:10 “*And the angel said unto them, fear not : for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.*”