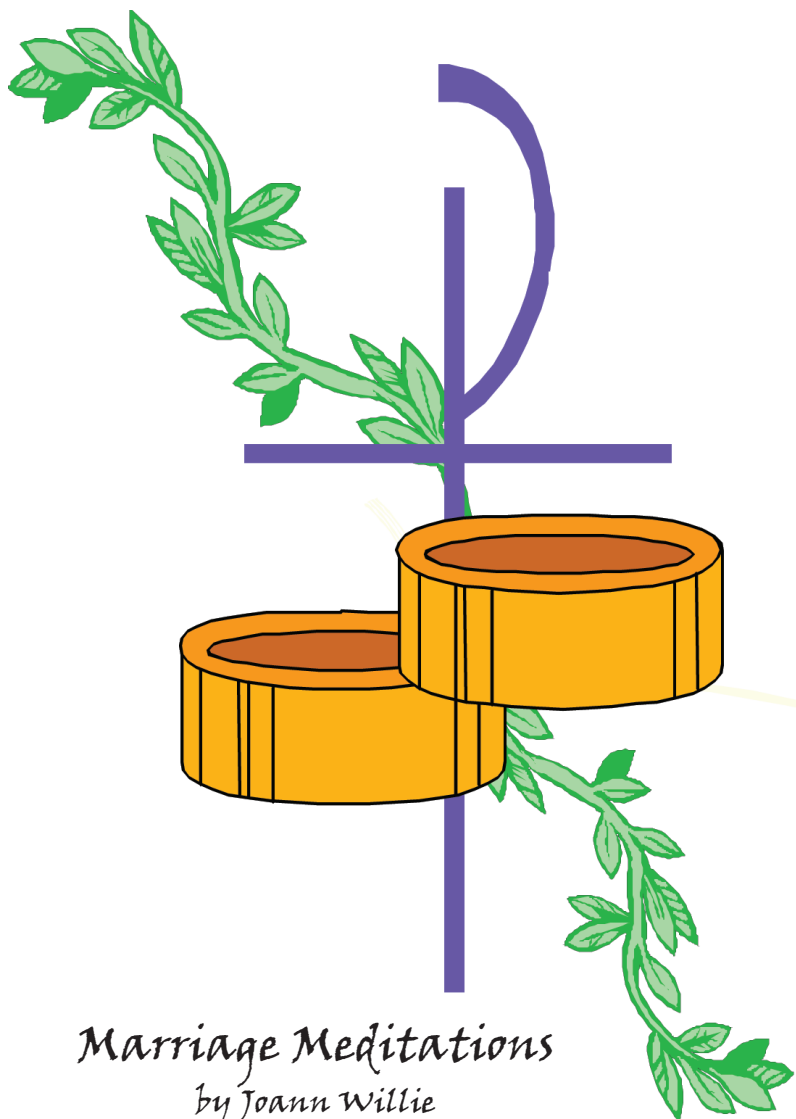


# Intertwined with Christ, the Vine



*Marriage Meditations*  
by Joann Willie

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## Introduction

*“I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.”*

*John 15:5 ESV*

Upon first glance, *Intertwined with Christ, the Vine* may seem like an unusual title for a booklet of meditations about Christian marriage, but, if you look more closely, you will recognize the vine and branches imagery as an appropriate metaphor for Christian marriage. To intertwine two or more objects means to twist them together, to coil them around a support, to weave them together so the finished product will be stronger than the individual strands or units.

In a Christian marriage, you, the husband and wife, are the branches intertwined with Christ, the Vine. You draw daily nourishment from Him and bear much fruit if you are united with Him. On the other hand, if you become separated from Him, you can do nothing; you will wither and die.

In Holy Baptism Christ grafted you to Himself. His life flows through you as you feed on His Word and Sacrament. From this baptismal union with Christ you receive forgiveness, peace with God, strength to defy Satan, and grace to walk as new creatures in Christ.

Likewise, Christ grafts you together as husband and wife in marriage. Each of you brings your own unique qualities to the marriage relationship. Together you produce a new entity, a new person. Being intertwined with Christ will make your relationship stronger, and you will produce fruit for Him.

In the words of Jeremiah 17:7-8: “Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.”

In Christian marriage you are intertwined with Christ and rooted in God's promises through His Word and Sacraments. Christ died for you on Calvary's cross and rose again to give you forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Through Baptism you are like flourishing trees planted by streams of living water. When you repent of your sins, your roots reach out to the never-failing supply of Living Water in His Word and Sacraments.

Nourished with His body and blood in the Lord's Supper, your leaves always remain green, despite heat and drought, through joyful times and times of trial and distress, for you are rooted in Christ's love. Intertwined with the Vine, you will also bear fruit for Him as you serve Him by serving your family members, neighbours, and community. Through your confession of Christ, others will be brought into His Kingdom. The fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23) will be evident in your lives as you mature in your relationship with Christ. In the words of the hymn writer, "As the branch is to the vine, I am His, and He is mine."

*Lutheran Service Book, #611, stanza 1. Text and music: Public Domain.*

## PRAYER

Dear Lord Jesus, as Your branches, always draw us closer to You, the Vine. We thank You for suffering death on the Cross and rising again to give us forgiveness and new life in You. We thank you for Your precious Word and Sacraments with which You nourish us, so that we may bear fruit for You. Bless our marriage; may we always be closely intertwined with You. We ask this in Your name. Amen.





## Why did God institute marriage?

*“The Lord God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.’”*

*Genesis 2:18*

Dr. Luther’s explanation of the Sixth Commandment states that “we should fear and love God so that we lead a sexually pure and decent life in what we say and do, and husband and wife love and honour each other.”

God instituted marriage for several reasons: for companionship of the spouses, for the physical relationship between the spouses, for the procreation of children, and as a partial remedy for sinful lust.

Genesis 2:18 describes how God created all the animals, but none of them was a suitable helper for Adam. So God caused Adam to fall asleep and created Eve from one of his ribs. When God brought Eve to him, Adam said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man” (Genesis 2:23). Here was the perfect helper for Adam!

God has created you to be suitable helpers for each other. He has created each of you with different strengths and traits. You differ from each other physically, emotionally and psychologically. You are not created the same. You should not expect your spouse to be exactly like you. God has created you to complete and complement one another. He has given you to each other to be companions as you mature in your relationship to Christ, the Vine.

God has also created you to delight in physical union, the total giving of yourself to each other. This physical intimacy makes the total union of your marriage more beautiful. This physical relationship is blessed by God, for He tells us in Hebrews 13:4: “Marriage should be honoured by all.” The unity of companionship is heightened by the union of bodies, making the unity of your marriage more complete.

The procreation of children is another reason for God's institution of marriage. In Genesis 1:28 we read: "God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.'" God's crowning blessing upon your union as husband and wife is the gift of children. God honours you by allowing you to share in the creation of another life. These children provide unique blessings in your life and are to be treated as a trust from God. In one sense, they are God's children, not your children. God makes you caretakers of this precious heritage.

In Psalm 128:3 the psalmist tells us: "Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your sons will be like olive shoots around your table." Intertwined with Christ, the Vine, you will bear offspring as God blesses your union. Then it will be your responsibility to teach your children God's Word, so their lives will also become intertwined with Christ, and they will bear fruit for Him.

God also instituted marriage as a partial remedy for sinful lust. St. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 7:2 *esv*: "But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband."

As a Christian spouse, think of sex as a God-given means of expressing your love to your spouse. At the same time, think of your love for your spouse as a pleasant restraint that does not permit you to abuse or degrade the sexual relationship between you. Focus on mutual delight with your spouse rather than self-gratification so that your marriage bed will remain undefiled.

## PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father, we thank You for instituting marriage and for the blessings of companionship, sexuality and children which You give us through our unity with one another. As Your Son chose to become one with us through His incarnation, so bless our union and make us truly one with You and with each other. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

