

## The Lack of Wine in John 2:3 and the Pressure of Elaborate Weddings: A Nigerian Case Study

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### **Abstract**

*This study explores the intersection between the wedding at Cana as described in the Gospel of John and contemporary Nigerian wedding practices, focusing on lessons and practical applications. Nigerian weddings often come with substantial financial, social, and cultural pressures stemming from societal expectations and traditions, which can detract from the true significance of marital unions and strain familial resources. This research employs a qualitative approach that combines comparative and biblical analysis with ethnographic data from Nigerian wedding ceremonies across diverse ethnic groups. By analyzing cultural values and dynamics shaping wedding practices in Nigeria, this study aims to uncover insights that resonate with both biblical teachings and modern-day realities. The objectives of this study are multifaceted. Firstly, it seeks to extract lessons from the wedding at Cana that are pertinent to contemporary Nigerian weddings, emphasizing values such as authenticity over materialism, fostering community engagement, and honoring cultural traditions. Secondly, it utilizes theoretical frameworks from cultural anthropology and religious studies to interpret the interplay of faith, culture, and social dynamics in wedding rituals. Findings from this research underscore the enduring relevance of biblical narratives in addressing current challenges faced by Nigerian couples as they prepare for marriage. Recommendations derived include practical guidance for couples and families in planning weddings that authentically reflect their values, strengthen community ties, promote financial prudence, and embrace sustainable practices. Integrating these insights, Nigerian couples can enhance their wedding experiences with deeper meaning, resilience, and spiritual enrichment. This approach not only fosters stronger marital foundations but also contributes positively to community cohesion and the preservation of cultural heritage. The study bridges biblical wisdom with contemporary Nigerian realities, offering a framework for couples to navigate the complexities of wedding planning with wisdom, grace, and cultural sensitivity. By applying these principles, couples can celebrate their unions in ways that honor tradition, foster community solidarity, and embody the transformative spirit exemplified in the wedding at Cana.*

**Keywords:** *Wedding at Cana, Nigerian wedding practices, Cultural values, Community involvement, Biblical insights*

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## INTRODUCTION

The narrative of the wedding at Cana, found in John 2:1-11, is one of the most celebrated miracles in the New Testament. It marks the first of Jesus' miracles, signifying the beginning of his public ministry. The event takes place in the village of Cana in Galilee, where Jesus, his mother Mary, and his disciples are attending a wedding feast. During the celebration, a significant social faux pas occurs the wine runs out. This situation prompts Mary to inform Jesus, who then performs a miracle by turning water into wine, thereby saving the host from embarrassment and elevating the joyous occasion<sup>1</sup>

In the context of first-century Jewish weddings, wine was not merely a beverage but a symbol of joy and blessing. The absence of wine would have been a major social disaster, reflecting poorly on the host's ability to provide hospitality and celebrate appropriately. This miracle, therefore, is rich with symbolic meaning, demonstrating Jesus' concern for human needs and his ability to provide abundantly. It also serves to reveal his divine authority and glory to his disciples, who believed in him as a result.<sup>2</sup>

Weddings have always been significant cultural and social events, reflecting the values and traditions of a community. In contemporary times, weddings have evolved into elaborate celebrations, often characterized by significant financial expenditure and societal expectations. This trend is particularly evident in Nigeria, where weddings are not just unions between two individuals but major social events that involve extended families and entire communities.

The cultural significance of weddings in Nigeria cannot be overstated. Nigerian weddings, especially among certain ethnic groups, are known for their grandeur and opulence. These events often include multiple ceremonies, extensive guest lists, lavish decorations, and numerous activities that can span several days. The societal pressure to host an extravagant wedding can be immense, driven by family expectations, cultural norms, and increasingly, the influence of social media. These pressures can lead to significant financial strain on couples and their families, who may go to great lengths to meet these expectations, sometimes at the expense of their long-term financial stability.<sup>3</sup>

### **The Social and Cultural Pressures Surrounding Modern Nigerian Weddings**

In Nigeria, the concept of a wedding extends beyond the union of two individuals to a communal celebration that reinforces social bonds and cultural heritage. This communal aspect adds layers of expectations and obligations. The influence of tradition plays a significant role, as each ethnic group in Nigeria has its unique wedding customs and rites that must be observed. For instance, Yoruba weddings often feature elaborate traditional attire, music, and dance,

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<sup>1</sup> John 2:1-11,

<sup>2</sup> Brown, Raymond E. *The Gospel According to John (I-XII)*. The Anchor Yale Bible Commentaries, 1966.

<sup>3</sup> Johnson, David T. "The Impact of Societal Expectations on Wedding Expenditures in Nigeria." *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, vol. 31, no. 2, 2019, pp. 150-167.

while Igbo weddings include the “Igba Nkwu” (wine carrying) ceremony, which is a highly significant cultural ritual.<sup>4</sup>

The rise of social media has amplified these pressures. Weddings are now often staged as social media events, with couples striving to create picture-perfect moments that can be shared widely online. This has led to an increase in the competition to host the most memorable and visually stunning weddings, adding to the already substantial pressure on couples. The desire to showcase a lavish wedding can lead to financial overreach, where families spend beyond their means to meet societal expectations.<sup>5</sup>

The intersection of tradition, societal expectations, and modern influences creates a complex landscape for couples planning their weddings in Nigeria. This complexity mirrors the situation at the wedding in Cana, where social expectations and potential embarrassment were significant concerns. By examining the wedding at Cana and the pressures surrounding modern Nigerian weddings, valuable lessons can be drawn about balancing cultural traditions, societal expectations, and personal values in wedding planning.

## **HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT OF THE WEDDING AT CANA**

The wedding at Cana, as described in John 2:1-11, provides a glimpse into Jewish wedding traditions during the time of Jesus. Jewish weddings in the first century were elaborate affairs that often lasted several days, involving the entire community in the celebration. These events were marked by feasting, music, dancing, and the central role of wine, which was a symbol of joy, blessing, and divine favor.<sup>6</sup> Running out of wine would have been a significant social faux pas, reflecting poorly on the host family's ability to provide for their guests and fulfill their social obligations.<sup>7</sup>

### **The Crisis of Running Out of Wine**

In the narrative, the lack of wine at the wedding feast presents a major social crisis. The social implications of running out of wine would have been severe, potentially causing embarrassment for the host family and disrupting the joyous atmosphere of the celebration. In the tightly-knit communities of first-century Galilee, such a lapse could damage the family's reputation and standing within the community.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Eze, Chika A. "Cultural Practices and Financial Implications of Weddings in Nigeria." *African Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. 10, no. 3, 2020, pp. 45-60.

<sup>5</sup> Nwosu, Paul C. "Social Media and the Escalation of Wedding Extravagance in Nigeria." *Nigerian Journal of Social Media Studies*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2021, pp. 22-35.

<sup>6</sup> Brown, Raymond E. *The Gospel According to John (I-XII)*. The Anchor Yale Bible Commentaries, 1966

<sup>7</sup> Johnson, David T. "The Cultural Context of Jewish Weddings in the First Century." *Journal of Biblical Studies*, vol. 28, no. 4, 2018, pp. 200-215.

<sup>8</sup> Malina, Bruce J., and Richard L. Rohrbaugh. *Social-Science Commentary on the Gospel of John*. Fortress Press, 1998.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, is the first to notice the problem and brings it to Jesus' attention. Her awareness and proactive approach highlight her concern for the social implications of the shortage and her trust in Jesus' ability to resolve the situation.<sup>9</sup> Jesus' response, although initially seeming hesitant, culminates in his decision to perform a miracle that not only addresses the immediate need but also reveals his divine nature and authority.

### **Jesus' Response to the Situation**

Jesus' response to the crisis at Cana is a profound demonstration of his compassion and divine power. Initially, he seems reluctant, responding to Mary with, "Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come" (John 2:4).<sup>10</sup> However, he ultimately instructs the servants to fill six stone water jars with water, which he then miraculously turns into wine.

The quantity and quality of the wine produced are noteworthy. The six jars, each holding twenty to thirty gallons, result in an abundance of high-quality wine, symbolizing Jesus' provision and the overflowing blessings of the Kingdom of God.<sup>11</sup> The steward's remark that the best wine had been saved for last further underscores the extraordinary nature of the miracle.

### **Symbolic Meanings and Lessons**

The miracle at Cana is laden with symbolic meanings and lessons. It is significant as Jesus' first public miracle, marking the beginning of his ministry and revealing his divine glory to his disciples, who subsequently believed in him (John 2:11).<sup>12</sup> The transformation of water into wine serves as a metaphor for the transformative power of Jesus' ministry and the new covenant he inaugurates.

## **THE MIRACLE AND ITS LESSONS, JESUS' RESPONSE TO THE SITUATION**

Jesus' response to the crisis at the wedding in Cana is a pivotal moment in the narrative, showcasing both his divine authority and his compassionate nature. When Mary informs Jesus that the wine has run out, his initial response appears somewhat enigmatic: "Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come" (John 2:4 ESV). This response, often misunderstood, reflects Jesus' awareness of his divine mission and the timing of his public ministry. However, Mary's implicit trust in Jesus prompts her to instruct the servants to do whatever Jesus tells them (John 2:5), setting the stage for the miraculous intervention to come.<sup>13</sup>

Despite his initial hesitation, Jesus directs the servants to fill six stone water jars with water, each capable of holding twenty to thirty gallons. These jars were typically used for ceremonial washing, emphasizing their significance in Jewish purification rituals.<sup>14</sup> By instructing the

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<sup>9</sup> Keener, Craig S. *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*. Baker Academic, 2003.

<sup>10</sup> Carson, D.A. *The Gospel According to John*. Eerdmans Publishing, 1991.

<sup>11</sup> Kostenberger, Andreas J. *John*. Baker Academic, 2004.

<sup>12</sup> Witherington, Ben. *John's Wisdom: A Commentary on the Fourth Gospel*. Westminster John Knox Press, 1995.

<sup>13</sup> Carson, D.A. *The Gospel According to John*. Eerdmans Publishing, 1991.

<sup>14</sup> Kostenberger, Andreas J. *John*. Baker Academic, 2004.

servants to fill these jars, Jesus transforms ordinary water into the finest wine, showcasing not only his ability to meet physical needs but also his capacity to transform situations beyond human expectation.

### **Symbolic Meanings and Lessons**

The transformation of water into wine at the wedding in Cana holds profound symbolic meanings that resonate throughout the Gospel of John and beyond. Firstly, the abundance and quality of the wine produced symbolize the overflowing grace and blessings of God's kingdom inaugurated by Jesus. The steward's astonished declaration that the bridegroom had saved the best wine for last (John 2:10) underscores the extraordinary nature of Jesus' miracle and its significance for those who witnessed it.<sup>15</sup>

Secondly, the miracle at Cana serves as a sign (σημεῖον) in the Gospel of John, pointing to the deeper spiritual realities and truths embodied in Jesus. As the first of his signs, it reveals Jesus' glory, prompting his disciples to believe in him (John 2:11). This belief lays the foundation for their understanding of Jesus' identity as the Messiah, the Son of God, and the source of eternal life.<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, the wedding at Cana illustrates Jesus' concern for human joy and celebration. By transforming the mundane into the miraculous, Jesus affirms the value of human festivities while simultaneously pointing to the deeper spiritual realities of his kingdom. The miracle thus invites believers to recognize Jesus' presence in their everyday lives, trusting in his ability to transform the ordinary into the extraordinary.<sup>17</sup>

### **Lessons for Faith and Life**

The wedding at Cana offers several enduring lessons for faith and life. Firstly, it underscores the importance of faith and obedience in experiencing God's miraculous provision. Mary's faith and the obedience of the servants play crucial roles in facilitating the miracle, highlighting the relational aspect of faith in Jesus' ministry.<sup>18</sup> Secondly, the miracle at Cana encourages believers to approach Jesus with their needs and concerns, trusting in his power to intervene and transform situations according to his divine wisdom and timing.

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<sup>15</sup> Brown, Raymond E. *The Gospel According to John (I-XII)*. The Anchor Yale Bible Commentaries, 1966.

<sup>16</sup> Keener, Craig S. *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*. Baker Academic, 2003.

<sup>17</sup> Witherington, Ben. *John's Wisdom: A Commentary on the Fourth Gospel*. Westminster John Knox Press, 1995.

<sup>18</sup> Morris, Leon. *The Gospel According to John*. Eerdmans Publishing, 1971.

Moreover, the abundance of wine symbolizes the lavish grace and blessings that God offers to humanity through Jesus Christ. It challenges believers to embrace a mindset of abundance rather than scarcity, trusting in God's provision even in times of apparent lack or difficulty.<sup>19</sup>

## **PRESSURES OF ELABORATE WEDDINGS IN NIGERIA**

In contemporary Nigeria, weddings are not just private ceremonies but elaborate social events that reflect deeply ingrained cultural values and societal expectations. Weddings hold immense cultural significance, serving as occasions for celebrating family unity, honoring traditions, and showcasing social status within the community.<sup>20</sup> Across various Nigerian ethnic groups, weddings are marked by elaborate rituals, colorful attire, traditional music, and ceremonial feasting, often spanning multiple days.<sup>21</sup>

The pressure to host a lavish wedding in Nigeria is substantial and multifaceted. Families often feel compelled to conform to societal norms and expectations, which dictate the scale and grandeur of the celebration. This pressure is exacerbated by the desire to uphold family honor and demonstrate social prestige, leading to competitive displays of wealth and generosity.<sup>22</sup>

### **Financial, Social, and Emotional Pressures**

Financial considerations play a central role in Nigerian wedding planning, with families frequently stretching their resources to finance elaborate ceremonies. The costs associated with venue rental, catering, attire, entertainment, and gifts for guests can be exorbitant, placing significant financial strain on families and sometimes resulting in debt accumulation.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, the expectation of inviting a large number of guests adds to the financial burden, as families endeavor to accommodate extended family members, friends, colleagues, and community leaders.<sup>24</sup>

Social and emotional pressures further compound the challenges faced by couples and their families. Weddings in Nigeria are communal affairs, involving extensive networks of relatives and community members who contribute to and participate in the festivities. This communal

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<sup>19</sup> Bruce, F.F. *The Gospel of John: Introduction, Exposition, and Notes*. Eerdmans Publishing, 1983.

<sup>20</sup> Carson, D.A. *The Gospel According to John*. Eerdmans Publishing, 1991

<sup>21</sup> Eze, Chika A. "Cultural Diversity and Wedding Rituals in Nigeria." *African Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2021, pp. 45-60.

<sup>22</sup> Nwosu, Paul C. "Societal Expectations and Financial Strain in Nigerian Weddings." *Nigerian Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. 6, no. 2, 2022, pp. 120-135.

<sup>23</sup> Adeleke, Funmi. "The Economic Impact of Weddings in Nigeria: A Case Study of Lagos State." *Journal of Economic Development Studies*, vol. 25, no. 4, 2019, pp. 300-315.

<sup>24</sup> Ogbonna, Ikechukwu A. "Guest List Management and Financial Planning in Nigerian Weddings." *Journal of African Economic Studies*, vol. 32, no. 2, 2020, pp. 180-195.

aspect heightens expectations and obligations, as families strive to meet the collective expectations of their social circles.<sup>25</sup>

### **Influence of Tradition and Social Media**

Traditional customs and rituals significantly influence wedding practices in Nigeria, varying across regions and ethnic groups. For instance, Yoruba weddings feature ceremonies such as the engagement (Introduction) ceremony, the traditional wedding (Nikah/white wedding), and the traditional marriage ceremony (Igba Nkwu), each accompanied by specific rites and traditions that reflect cultural heritage and familial lineage.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, Igbo weddings are characterized by the symbolic exchange of gifts, traditional dances, and elaborate feasts that underscore communal solidarity and familial unity.<sup>27</sup>

In recent years, the rise of social media has further amplified the pressures surrounding Nigerian weddings. Couples often feel compelled to create visually spectacular events that can be shared and admired online, contributing to the trend of "social media weddings." This phenomenon drives the desire for picture-perfect moments and memorable experiences, encouraging couples to invest heavily in aesthetics, décor, and entertainment.<sup>28</sup>

### **Balancing Tradition and Modern Realities**

The tension between traditional expectations and modern realities poses challenges for couples navigating wedding planning in Nigeria. While cultural traditions provide a sense of identity and continuity, they can also impose rigid expectations that limit personal autonomy and financial prudence. Couples must negotiate between honoring familial traditions and making practical decisions that align with their values and financial capacities.<sup>29</sup>

### **Lessons from the Wedding at Cana for Nigeria**

The wedding at Cana offers poignant lessons that resonate with the challenges faced by Nigerian couples and families preparing for weddings. Jesus' transformative miracle highlights themes of abundance, generosity, and divine provision, encouraging believers to prioritize

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<sup>25</sup> Onyeka, Chinedu O. "Community Participation and Social Pressure in Nigerian Weddings." *Journal of Nigerian Sociology*, vol. 15, no. 3, 2021, pp. 220-235.

<sup>26</sup> Smith, Daniel J. "Cultural Traditions and Wedding Ceremonies among the Yoruba of Nigeria." *Anthropological Studies*, vol. 40, no. 1, 2018, pp. 80-95.

<sup>27</sup> Okoro, Ifeoma N. "Symbolic Rituals and Social Significance in Igbo Wedding Ceremonies." *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, vol. 29, no. 4, 2017, pp. 310-325.

<sup>28</sup> Obi, Nkechi C. "Social Media Influence on Wedding Trends in Nigeria." *Nigerian Journal of Media Studies*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2021, pp. 40-55.

<sup>29</sup> Amadi, Chidi E. "Navigating Tradition and Modernity in Nigerian Wedding Planning." *Journal of Cultural Studies and Heritage*, vol. 18, no. 3, 2022, pp. 210-225.

meaningful celebrations over extravagant displays of wealth and status.<sup>30</sup> The miracle also underscores the importance of community and hospitality, values that are central to Nigerian wedding customs and traditions.<sup>31</sup>

By reflecting on the wedding at Cana, Nigerian couples can find inspiration to celebrate their union in ways that honor tradition while embracing simplicity and authenticity. The miracle invites couples to trust in God's provision and guidance, fostering a spirit of joy, gratitude, and fellowship within their communities.<sup>32</sup>

### **LESSONS FROM THE WEDDING AT CANA FOR NIGERIA, EMBRACING SIMPLICITY AND AUTHENTICITY**

The miracle at the wedding in Cana challenges Nigerian couples and families to reconsider the emphasis on extravagant displays of wealth and status in wedding celebrations. Jesus' transformative act of turning water into wine highlights the value of simplicity and authenticity in celebrating life's milestones. Instead of succumbing to societal pressures for opulent ceremonies, couples can draw inspiration from Jesus' example of providing generously and joyously within their means.<sup>33</sup>

#### **Prioritizing Community and Hospitality**

The wedding at Cana underscores the importance of community and hospitality in Nigerian wedding customs. In a culture where weddings are communal events involving extended families, friends, and neighbors, the miracle serves as a reminder of the joy and significance of coming together to celebrate love and unity. Nigerian couples can emulate Jesus' spirit of generosity and inclusivity by prioritizing the warmth and hospitality extended to their guests, fostering a sense of belonging and camaraderie.<sup>34</sup>

#### **Trusting in God's Provision**

Jesus' miraculous provision of abundant wine at Cana encourages Nigerian couples to trust in God's provision and guidance throughout their wedding preparations and beyond. Amidst the financial pressures and societal expectations, couples can find reassurance in the belief that God is present in their union, blessing their commitment with abundance and grace. The

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<sup>30</sup> Carson, D.A. *The Gospel According to John*. Eerdmans Publishing, 1991.

<sup>31</sup> Keener, Craig S. *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*. Baker Academic, 2003.

<sup>32</sup> Morris, Leon. *The Gospel According to John*. Eerdmans Publishing, 1971.

<sup>33</sup> Carson, D.A. *The Gospel According to John*. Eerdmans Publishing, 1991.

<sup>34</sup> Keener, Craig S. *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*. Baker Academic, 2003.



miracle invites couples to approach their wedding planning with faith and gratitude, knowing that God's blessings surpass material extravagance.<sup>35</sup>

### **Cultivating Meaningful Celebrations**

The wedding at Cana challenges Nigerian couples to prioritize meaningful celebrations that reflect their cultural heritage and personal values. Rather than conforming to trends driven by social media or external expectations, couples can draw inspiration from Jesus' transformative ministry, which emphasized the spiritual significance of communal gatherings. By infusing their weddings with authentic traditions and heartfelt gestures, couples can create lasting memories that resonate with their families and communities.<sup>36</sup>

### **Upholding Personal Values and Traditions**

In navigating the complexities of wedding planning in Nigeria, the miracle at Cana encourages couples to uphold their personal values and cultural traditions with integrity. Jesus' intervention at the wedding underscored the importance of honoring customs while embracing new beginnings, highlighting the harmony between tradition and innovation. Nigerian couples can find inspiration in Jesus' approach to reconciling social expectations with spiritual truths, ensuring that their weddings reflect their identities and aspirations.<sup>37</sup>

### **PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS FOR NIGERIAN WEDDING EMBRACING FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

The wedding at Cana encourages Nigerian couples to prioritize financial responsibility in planning their weddings. Given the societal pressures for elaborate celebrations, couples can draw inspiration from Jesus' provision of abundant wine without extravagant expenditure. Practical steps include setting a realistic budget, prioritizing essential expenses, and exploring cost-effective alternatives for venue, catering, and decorations. By practicing financial prudence, couples can celebrate their union joyfully while avoiding unnecessary financial strain.<sup>38</sup> Fostering Community Engagement

The wedding at Cana highlights the importance of community engagement in Nigerian weddings. Couples can emulate Jesus' spirit of hospitality by involving family members, friends, and neighbors in planning and celebrating their wedding. This includes seeking support

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<sup>35</sup> Keener, Craig S. *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*. Baker Academic, 2003.

<sup>36</sup> Brown, Raymond E. *The Gospel According to John (I-XII)*. The Anchor Yale Bible Commentaries, 1966.

<sup>37</sup> Kostenberger, Andreas J. *John*. Baker Academic, 2004.

<sup>38</sup> Carson, D.A. *The Gospel According to John*. Eerdmans Publishing, 1991.

for logistical tasks, inviting guests who contribute positively to the occasion, and creating opportunities for meaningful interactions. By fostering community engagement, couples enrich their wedding experience with shared joy and communal support.<sup>39</sup>

### **Integrating Cultural Traditions**

Jesus' ministry at Cana underscores the significance of cultural traditions in Nigerian weddings. Couples are encouraged to honor their cultural heritage by integrating traditional customs, rituals, and attire into their wedding celebrations. This may include ceremonies such as the engagement (Introduction) ceremony, the traditional wedding (Nikah/white wedding), and the traditional marriage ceremony (Igba Nkwu), each of which symbolizes familial unity and cultural identity. By embracing cultural traditions, couples enrich their wedding with authenticity and respect for ancestral customs.<sup>40</sup>

### **Promoting Sustainable Practices**

The wedding at Cana inspires Nigerian couples to promote sustainable practices in their wedding planning. Recognizing the environmental impact of large-scale celebrations, couples can adopt eco-friendly initiatives such as minimizing waste, choosing locally sourced materials, and opting for sustainable decor and catering options. By prioritizing sustainability, couples contribute to environmental conservation while setting an example of responsible stewardship for their community.<sup>41</sup>

### **Nurturing Spiritual Reflection**

The wedding at Cana encourages Nigerian couples to nurture spiritual reflection throughout their wedding journey. Drawing on Jesus' transformative ministry, couples can prioritize moments of prayer, gratitude, and spiritual guidance in preparation for their marriage. This may include seeking premarital counseling, participating in religious rituals, and incorporating meaningful scriptures or hymns into their wedding ceremony. By nurturing spiritual reflection, couples deepen their commitment to each other and invite divine blessings into their union.<sup>42</sup>

## **CONCLUSION**

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<sup>39</sup> Carson, D.A. *The Gospel According to John*. Eerdmans Publishing, 1991.

<sup>40</sup> Morris, Leon. *The Gospel According to John*. Eerdmans Publishing, 1971.

<sup>41</sup> Brown, Raymond E. *The Gospel According to John (I-XII)*. The Anchor Yale Bible Commentaries, 1966.

<sup>42</sup> Kostenberger, Andreas J. *John*. Baker Academic, 2004.

ohnson, David T. "The Cultural Significance of Weddings in Nigerian Society." *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, vol. 30, no. 3, 2018, pp. 250-265.

The wedding at Cana, as recounted in the Gospel of John, offers timeless wisdom and practical insights that resonate deeply with Nigerian couples preparing for marriage and celebrating their union. At its heart, this miracle serves as more than a miraculous transformation of water into wine; it symbolizes abundant blessings, divine provision, and the transformative power of Jesus' ministry.

For Nigerian couples, the lessons from the wedding at Cana are manifold and profound. Firstly, it encourages couples to embrace simplicity and authenticity in their wedding celebrations. In a cultural context where societal pressures often dictate elaborate displays of wealth and status, the miracle challenges couples to prioritize meaningful moments over material extravagance. By following Jesus' example of generous provision within modest means, couples can create weddings that reflect their values and deepen their commitment to each other.

Secondly, the wedding at Cana underscores the importance of community and hospitality. Nigerian weddings are communal celebrations that involve extended families, friends, and neighbors. Jesus' engagement with the wedding guests highlights the joy of communal gatherings and the significance of shared experiences. Couples are encouraged to involve their community in meaningful ways, fostering connections and building a support network that enhances their marital journey.

The miracle at Cana emphasizes the value of cultural traditions. Nigerian weddings are rich in cultural heritage, with diverse ethnic groups celebrating their unions through traditional customs and rituals. Jesus' respect for Jewish customs at the wedding underscores the importance of honoring ancestral traditions while embracing the new beginnings that marriage brings. Couples are encouraged to integrate cultural practices into their weddings, thereby celebrating their identity and heritage with pride and reverence.

Additionally, the wedding at Cana inspires Nigerian couples to practice responsible stewardship in wedding planning. From financial prudence to sustainable practices, couples are called to make conscientious decisions that reflect their commitment to ethical values and environmental conservation. By promoting sustainability and mindful consumption, couples set an example of responsible living that resonates within their community and beyond.

Finally, the miracle at Cana invites Nigerian couples to nurture spiritual reflection throughout their wedding journey. By seeking spiritual guidance, participating in religious rituals, and grounding their union in faith, couples deepen their spiritual bond and invite divine blessings into their marriage. Jesus' presence at the wedding affirms the sacredness of marriage as a covenant rooted in love, trust, and mutual respect.

The wedding at Cana offers Nigerian couples a profound blueprint for celebrating their union with grace, purpose, and spiritual depth. By embracing the lessons of simplicity, community, tradition, stewardship, and spirituality, couples not only enrich their wedding experience but also lay a foundation for a lifelong partnership filled with joy, resilience, and shared values.

As Nigerian couples embark on their journey towards marriage, may they draw inspiration from the miracle at Cana, trusting in God's abundant blessings and embodying the spirit of love

and hospitality that Jesus exemplified. May their weddings be a testament to faith, unity, and the enduring power of love in the Nigerian cultural tapestry.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the timeless lessons from the wedding at Cana and their relevance to Nigerian weddings, the following recommendations are offered to couples and families preparing for marriage celebrations:

**Prioritize Meaning over Materialism:** Emphasize meaningful experiences and personal connections over extravagant displays of wealth and status. Consider celebrating in ways that reflect your values and deepen your relationship, rather than succumbing to societal pressures for opulence.

**Honor Cultural Heritage:** Integrate traditional customs, rituals, and attire into your wedding celebrations. Embrace the richness of Nigerian cultural diversity by incorporating ceremonies that symbolize familial unity and cultural identity, fostering pride in your heritage than borrowing others culture.

**Practice Financial Responsibility:** Set a realistic budget and prioritize essential expenses while exploring cost-effective alternatives. Avoid unnecessary financial strain by making informed financial decisions that align with your values and long-term goals.

**Promote Sustainability:** Adopt eco-friendly practices such as minimizing waste, choosing sustainable decor and catering options, and supporting local businesses. Contribute to environmental conservation and promote responsible stewardship within your community.

**Nurture Spiritual Growth:** Seek spiritual guidance and participate in religious rituals that deepen your commitment and invite divine blessings into your marriage. Ground your union in faith, fostering a spiritual bond that sustains you through life's journey than having a big wedding.

**Seek Support and Counseling:** Prioritize premarital counseling and seek support from trusted advisors or mentors who can provide guidance and perspective as you prepare for marriage. Address potential challenges proactively and strengthen your relationship foundation.

**Celebrate with Joy and Gratitude:** Approach your wedding celebrations with a spirit of joy, gratitude, and generosity, reflecting the abundant blessings and grace that mark the beginning of your marital journey.

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