

Genesis 2:18-25

Marriage: A Creation Gift

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Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." ¹⁹ Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. ²⁰ The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. ²¹ 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."*

²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. ²⁵ And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

(Pastor prays)

God knew where we would be, what would be happening in our lives and what we would need to hear at this point in our life together. By His goodness and in His providence, He has landed us on this beautiful text that describes for us the creation of woman and the very first marriage.

Here is a union, conceived by the Divine, completed in a garden and set as an example. In fact, the Apostle Paul would reach all the way back to Genesis Chapter 2 in order to write Ephesians Chapter 5. Before Adam ever held Eve in his arms, she already existed in the mind of God. And this morning we see the loving creation of the first bride created for the first groom. This morning we watch as God, the great creator, fashions Eve, the mother of all living, and brings her to Adam, the lonely man. The glorious

union performed in the garden takes place before sin creeps in and creates despair in Chapter 3. But in Chapter 2, we are still living in paradise. Genesis 2:18-25 gives us a picture of what a God-honoring marriage can look like and I want to draw some simple traits of a good marriage from this beautiful passage. We know that:

A Good Marriage Honors the Lord

What are the traits of a good marriage?

Jesus Is Lord of the Home

Now to get to this point, we have to zoom out and look at the entire passage as a whole. As this passage describes the first union, I want you to see that behind every action there is a Divine initiative. There's God's hand moving the process along. Let me show you what I mean.

Look in verses 18, 19, 21 & 22. Verse 18 – The Lord God *said*. Verse 19 – The Lord God *formed*. Verse 21 – The Lord God *caused*. And in verse 22 – The Lord God *made*.

When you read the entire account, you notice that the centerpiece of all of this is the Lord God. He is the one bringing Adam and Eve together. God does it. Isn't that what the Bible teaches? In Psalm 127:1,

*Unless the LORD builds the house,
those who build it labor in vain.*

*Unless the LORD watches over the city,
the watchman stays awake in vain.*

This speaks to us who are believers. If Christ is not the Lord of your life and of your home, then you flirt with disaster. This not only speaks to those of us who are married, this speaks to those who one day hope to be married. As a Christian, why would you ever date someone who's not a believer? Push that a little further. Why would you go out romantically with someone who claims to be a Christian but shows no evidence? He doesn't live like one. Here's a good litmus test: If he doesn't like to go to church, doesn't like to read the Bible, doesn't like to sing to the Lord, doesn't like to pray - guess what he is *not*? A Christian. If he claims to be a Christian but doesn't live like one, one day, when he claims to be a husband, guess what he won't live like?

If you are already married, this passage should make you look inward. If Jesus is ever going to be Lord of your home, he must first be Lord of YOUR life. So what does that mean? Are there some irreducible minimums? Can we boil it down to one or two things? I'll give you two.

For Christ to be Lord of your life, you will need to understand the Gospel. Understand that God is Holy beyond anything you can conceive, and you are much more sinful than you think you are. And that separation is greater than you can cross. Jesus Christ lived perfectly, died sacrificially on a cross, taking the wrath of God away which leaves the love of God remaining, so that when you turn and believe that Jesus Christ died for your sins and God raised Him from the dead, the Bible teaches, you will be saved. That's one thing.

But that one thing boils over into evidence. Here is the second thing. There must be a pursuit of holiness, a desire to be different, to be changed. If you don't desire holiness, how can you know if you are a Christian or not? Because someone wrote it down somewhere? That's not going to help you. The first trait of a good marriage is that Christ is Lord of the home. The second trait is:

Marriage is About Solving Problems, Not Creating Them

Let me show you what I mean. Let's start again with verse 18. Read that first startling sentence. *Then the LORD God said, "It is **not good** that the man should be alone;* That's astonishing. Verse 18 is the first time the Lord uses this startling phrase – **not good**. After every creative act, God says "It's good." When God speaks creation into being, every time afterward He does an assessment and says, "It is good." Seven times in six days of creation, God says, "It is good." But now, for the very first time, God looks at something and says, "It is not good."

Into this perfect goodness something "Not Good" has crept. The skies are full of birds, the sea has fish. The land has animals walking across it. But Adam. Here we have the very first problem. And there was only one remedy – create a woman. Some of you should be saying "Amen" to that. After the dawn of creation, in a perfect and sinless world, there was only one thing that could make it better – a woman.

If you struggle with some sort of self-esteem issue in the marriage, this should be like ointment to your soul. Woman was created because of a void, to remedy a situation. She was created to change God's assessment, to take the Divine statement "It is not good" and make it right. If you are a wife or hope to be, God created you because the situation of your husband was *not good* without you. (That's another place you could say "'Amen.' Should've seen him before I got him.") If you are a wife, God created you to solve problems, not to make problems. Men should say "Amen" to that. As a matter of fact, that was so good I'm going to say it again. God created you to *solve* problems, not to *make* problems.

There are few things more stressful for a believer than to live in a home where Jesus is not Lord and problems abound. And almost all problems in marriage are at their root, spiritual problems. They come out of some problem with you and the Lord, problems that come after Genesis 3 when sin enters the human heart. And because marriage is two foul sinners coming together, Christ must be Lord at home and it starts personally with you. Marriage was created to solve a problem, not create one.

Let me give you something else.

The Wife is Valued Tremendously

There is sort of zoological parade going on for Adam in verses 18-20. *Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."¹⁹ Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name.²⁰ The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him.* The problem started twice. Let's look at the words used. *Helper*. He needed *help*. Adam needed an *indispensable partner*. God would create for Adam someone who would correspond to him.

That word "helper" or "helpmate" is a strange word and it is not what we think of. The trouble when trying to interpret a word is that we bring all of the baggage of the English language and try to interpret the word "helper" through what we know through our

culture and slang and how we use the word “helper.” And so, when you hear the word “helper” it sounds a little bit condescending. But that is absolutely the wrong way to understand this passage. In God’s design, what was missing in the man, the woman would accomplish.

The Bible teaches that the husband is in a position of authority and then in Ephesians 5, the husband is a picture of the Gospel. Paul would say that husbands should love their wives the way Christ loves the church. The wives are to submit themselves to the husband the way the church does to Christ thereby creating a picture of the Gospel for the world to see.

So here in this text, the word “helper” is not subservient or less powerful. In fact, most of the time that word “helper” is used in the Old Testament to describe how God helps His people. The verb form of the word means "to save from danger" or "to deliver from death." In Psalm 121:1-2 the same word is used to say,

I lift up my eyes to the hills.

From where does my help come?

*² My help comes from the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.*

So you take that understanding of the word and bring it back to this passage to see that God said, I’m going to make him a “helper.” No wonder the writer of Proverbs wrote in Proverbs 18:22, *He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the LORD.* Or in Proverbs 31:10, *An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels.*

The wife has tremendous value. Our passage goes on to say that God will make a wife suitable or fit for him. In other words, "I’m going to make just what Adam needs." Also, notice, there has been no mention of children yet, no mention of her ability to conceive or be fruitful and multiply. What you are finding is that the value of the woman had nothing to do with the ability to bear children but everything to do with her ability to complete that man. She has value in herself.

You will find in the text that God has now created Eve out of the rib and notice the language in verse 22. *And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he*

*made into a woman and **brought** her to the man.* It's the idea of a father walking the bride down the aisle, giving her away. The marriage ceremony is designed not only to have a big celebration but to bring together our friends and family and those closest to us into one gathering and in front of our social circle, standing and saying we promise to each other and we promise to God and we live under the pressure of these people holding us accountable. That's why we have ceremonies. The father bringing the bride down the aisle comes out of Genesis 2 where God brought Eve to Adam. So wives should consider themselves as a gift, not a burden. She is to be valued tremendously.

Let's talk about the men a little bit. What about them?

The Husband is Respected Tremendously

You get that from Genesis 1 and 2. You'll notice in the order of creation, God first created man; then He created woman, giving us a picture of leadership in the home where man is to provide leadership and protection and provision. Man is to set the tone to point the family to the cross.

Paul picks it up from Genesis 2 and in Ephesians 5 he says a husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church, and then a wife is to submit to her husband as the church does, paying tremendous respect to him, that your love for Christ is displayed through your love for your husband. No wonder the writer of Proverbs would say in Proverbs 12:4, *An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, but she who brings shame is like rottenness in his bones.*

If God gives you a Christian man who loves the Lord, and loves you and by God's goodness you have children and he loves the children, give thanks to God and respect and honor that husband, and in so doing, you are living out Ephesians 5 – the Gospel. We have forgotten the wonderful virtue it is to have a man who loves God, loves his family, loves the church and does what is right. There are so few of them left in the world. If you've got one of those men, you need today to give great respect and what you end up doing is painting a picture of the Gospel.

I'll give you a fifth point and make this the last one.

Marriage is Marked by Loyalty

Notice in verses 24-25, *Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. 25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.* For teenage boys, the only word they have heard so far is "naked." Would you get to that part please?

Let's take a look at it then but you have to take verse 24 and verse 25 together. These verses are less about sex and more about covenant loyalty. It's interesting that a *man* should leave his father and mother. The word "leaving" points to a new family, a new covenant. Cleaving (hold fast). Here is the committed faithfulness that one person promises to the other that, regardless of what the future holds, they face it as one... Faithfulness to a calling by God and a promise to God, understanding that a Christian marriage displays Christ and the church.

It preaches the Gospel. And before you can really work on your marriage, you must first come to the cross of Jesus yourself. You must put your old self to death. To crucify is to be done with your anger, bitterness, resentment and unfaithfulness because until that happens in marriage, verse 25 never comes to fruition. *Naked and not ashamed.* Not masked by guilt or disordered by lust. Not hampered by shame. It happens when two people can individually say, "I have been crucified with Christ and it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me." You see, a God-honoring marriage starts with you and Jesus Christ.

(Pastor prays)