

Man And Woman

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Date: 07 May 2017

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- [0 : 00] Genesis, the first three chapters are so packed with insight and foundational for how we live as a Christian that I was initially going to cover Genesis 2 and 3 together as a unit, and then it turned out that that was going to be impossible unless we meet here for four hours.
- So we're going to cover just chapter 2, and I normally have an introduction for my sermons, but I don't today because it's so interesting that we don't need one.
- I'm going to be talking about work and how God calls us to our work as worship, and I'm going to talk about relationships, talk about marriage and singleness, talk about sex.
- These are all very interesting topics, so I don't think there needs to be an introduction. So here, let's begin in verse 4. These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.
- So this opening clause, this formula is a refrain that recurs throughout the book of Genesis to introduce a new section. So it says these are the generations of Noah or Isaac or Jacob, as you'll see throughout.
- [1 : 07] And so here it's talking about the heavens and the earth. So this is the beginning history, really proto-history, if you might call it, the first history of the human race. Verse 5 says, Now, I told you that I'm going to be talking about work and relationship, and this passage tells us that humanity was created for worship and relationship that represents and resembles the triune God.
- Now, if that's the case, why is the narrator going into this description about the field and plants? And that will become clear in a second, because it's the bush of the field is a reference to just wild shrubbery that grows when the spring rains come in the ancient Near East.
- So it's the bushes that spring up by themselves without human work. And then the second part, the small plant of the field, is a reference to cultivated grain, so grains that only grow when people work on it, when they farm the land, right?
- And so these two parts, they constitute a problem. There's no bush of the field and no small plant of the field. And because of that, God gives a two-part solution that's for the Lord God had not, and the reason for this is that the Lord God had not caused it to rain on the land.
- That's the reason why there's no bush of the field, the wild shrubbery. And there's also no man to work the ground. So that's the reason why there's no cultivated grain, no small plants. And so this sets you up to expect a two-part solution to this two-part problem.
- [2 : 44] So verses 6 to 7, And the mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground. Now, the sentence break is in an odd place in the English Standard Version.
- There's a sentence break in the original Hebrew at the end of verse 5. And I think that's the correct way to read it. And if you read it that way, it fits the structure that we've been working with.

So there was no rain. So there was no plants in the bush of the field. So God gives rain. That's what he does. He sends a mist is coming up from the ground. And that's a reference to clouds.

Job 36, 27 makes that clear where it says, God draws up the drops of water. They distill his mist in rain. It's the same word, right? So God sends the cloud to bring rain to the earth so that the bush of the field might grow.

And people in the ancient Near East, I mean, they don't understand evaporation, condensation yet, right? So they thought of clouds as rising from the ground. And that's what it looks like. If you look on the horizon and clouds come approach, it looks like it's rising from the ground.

[3 : 53] And then secondly, God creates man, right? But why is this part about rain important? You have to remember that Moses, who's writing this, is riding with the Israelites in the wilderness in mind, right?

That's his primary audience. And if you know of the ancient religions in the ancient Near East, especially in the land of Canaan, they worship the god named Baal.

And they live in it. It's a land where there's no irrigation. There's no rivers like Egypt or Nile. You, through irrigation, water the ground. Canaan is a land that's watered by rains.

And because of that, rain was an extremely important part of life. If there's no rain, there's no life. If there's no rain for that season, you die. I mean, because there's no food. And so they were very desperately in need of rain.

And because of that, the temptation to idolatry, to worship the god of rain, Baal, was extremely appealing for the Israelites as they entered the land of Canaan.

[4 : 53] So Moses includes this here to indicate that, no, Baal did not give rain. He's not the rider on the clouds, as they called it. It's the Lord God who gives rain.

And that was the case from the very beginning. And so the rain brings forth wild vegetation in the field, but there's still no cultivated grain, so God forms man.

Verse 7, Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostril the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. He forms man intimately, personally, directly.

The language is reminiscent of a potter shaping his work. And he breathes the breath of life into him to make him a living creature. And this is a living creature.

He's not setting man apart from the rest of the animals, because the animals are also described as living creatures in Chapter 1. It's rather referring to, it's separating conscious beings, conscious animals from animals that are not, I mean the plants and other aspects of creation that do not breathe.

[6 : 00] But what distinguishes man from animals is not the fact that he has a birth of life, but the fact that he's created in the image of God, right? And we saw that in Chapter 1. So God sends the mist and then forms the man, and by doing so he brings about this garden.

Verses 8 to 9. The Lord God had planted a garden in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground the Lord God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food.

The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Now, so this sets up the rest of the narrative, so it's important. And the garden is basically paradise.

The word Eden means pleasure and delight. And it's impossible for us to locate it precisely where it was, even though many people have tried, because that's not really the point of the narrative.

So Moses, when he writes Genesis 15, 18 of God's promise, of the promised land to Abraham, he says, to your offspring I give this land from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, right?

[7 : 13] That's mentioned in the description about the Garden of Eden. And so the Garden of Eden is basically a type. It's a picture of God's promised land.

And so when Israelites, as they're approaching Canaan, the land of Canaan that God promised them, Moses paints this picture of Eden and says, see, what you lost in Eden, that's what you're returning to as you obey God and follow him and pursue him.

That's why the Garden of Eden is described here in this way. And it's supposed to remind people of the land that's ahead of them, the land of Canaan.

And of course, for us, we recognize that the promised land is itself a type of heaven, right? It points to our ultimate dwelling with God. And so in Hebrews 11.8, he writes that Abraham was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God, right?

And so that's why Eden is described as in the east, because east represents the presence of God. It's where the sun rises, right? And so here, Eden is a picture of paradise, what it looks like, what it's like to be in the presence of God.

[8 : 24] So it's no wonder then that later, when Israelites build a tabernacle for God's dwelling or the temple for God's dwelling, that they build it as a replica of the Garden of Eden.

So they reference the descriptions here in Genesis 1. So the precious stones set to abound in Eden, like gold or onyx are all used copiously in the construction of the tabernacle and temple.

The temple, like the Garden of Eden, is set to have its entrance in the east, right? And the temple, like the Garden of Eden also, is set to be as God is seen traversing in it, and you see God walking in it in the Garden of Eden as well.

And in the temple, in the description of Ezekiel, in the eschatological temple, the temple of the end times, he says there's a river flowing through it, like the Garden of Eden.

And so Eden then is a picture of the presence of God. So now continuing the description of Eden in verses 15 to 17 confirmed this connection between the temple, the presence of God, and the Garden of Eden.

[9 : 32] So Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat.

For in the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die. God commands Adam to work and to keep the garden. That's why the whole description of the plants coming up was important, because this is part of God's commission to Adam.

And now this pair of words, to work and to keep it, only occur again in the rest of the Bible in the context of work in the temple.

Again, so it's used to describe the duties of the Levites, to work and keep the temple grounds. So then Eden is a big, basically a paradise, and it's a picture of the presence of God.

It's the temple. And Adam and Eve are created as his representatives, as his images in the temple. And so that's what's going on. And that shows us that we were created for worship.

[10 : 35] That's one of the main reasons for which we were created. We were created for worship, and we were created for relationship. And because we were created for that way, without worship, there's always a nighed sense of an emptiness within.

An acclaimed American novelist, David Foster Wallace, spoke of this in his commencement address in Kenyon College. He says, Here's something else that's weird but true. In the day-to-day trenches of adult life, there is actually no such thing as atheism.

There is no such thing as not worshipping. Everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship. And the compelling reason for maybe choosing some sort of God or a spiritual type thing to worship, be it Jesus Christ or Allah, be it Yahweh or the wicked mother goddess or the four noble truths or some inviolable set of ethical principles, is that pretty much anything else you worship will eat you alive.

If you worship money and things, if they are where you tap real meaning in life, then you will never have enough, never feel you have enough. It's the truth. Worship your body and beauty and sexual allure, and you will always feel ugly.

And when time and age start showing, you will die a million deaths before they finally grieve you. On one level, we all know this stuff already. It's been codified as myths, proverbs, clichés, epigrams, parables, the skeleton of every great story.

[12 : 06] The whole trick is keeping the truth up front in daily consciousness. Worship power. You will end up feeling weak and afraid, and you will need ever more power over others to numb you to your own fear.

Worship your intellect. Being seen as smart, you will end up feeling stupid, a fraud, always on the verge of being found out. But the insidious thing about these forms of worship is they're unconscious.

They are default settings. We all worship. And until we are in proper relationship with God, until we are worshipping God as our creator, we will never be able to fill that void in our hearts.

Then how then are we to worship God? There is, of course, the temple worship of Christians gathering together corporately and worshipping God. That's an important part of worship. That's what we do as the gathered church.

But there's also worship as the scattered church, when we are not together. And that's what Moses here talks about in Genesis 2.

[13 : 08] We might call that garden worship. Romans 12.1, Paul says, To present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

So then our entire life is supposed to be one uninterrupted spiritual worship to God. And this makes sense, doesn't it?

I mean, if we think of worship only as what we do when we're gathered together on a Sunday morning, then you're worshipping God maybe 3,000 to 4,000 hours in your lifetime.

But compare that to the fact that the same person probably works 60,000 to 80,000 hours at work. If you're only worshipping God when you're gathered as a church corporately, then you are giving God a meager and inadequate portion of your life because he deserves your all.

Your whole life is supposed to be a life of worship. And that's where this is striking, this striking and life-altering insight comes in in Genesis 1 to 2. God puts Adam in the Garden of Eden to work and keep it.

[14 : 14] And that's an act of worship to God. And this work that he does is described in amazing terms because it says in Genesis 2.2, God finished his work that he had done, right?

So the cosmic work of creating the entire universe is described in exactly the same terms as Adam working and keeping the garden. Same word, work.

There's cosmic significance in the work that we do every day. We can't create like God does. We talked about that, right? The word create in the Bible is only used in reference to God.

But we are sub-creators, right? And J.R.R. Tolkien, I think, coined that term. We create, we can't create out of nothing, but we reorder things. We reorganize things.

We make things react. We put things together. And we are sub-creators, secondary, derivative kind of creation. And that's what's implicit in God's blessing and charge in Genesis 1.28.

[15 : 12] Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth. So the dominion that we exercise over all of creation is what we do as God's representative rulers in the world.

And that's at the heart of the Bible's definition of work, what we do when we work. And in his classic book, *Christ and Culture*, you've probably heard of it, right?

H. Richard Niebuhr defines culture as the artificial, secondary environment which man superimposes on the natural, right? And that's a great definition of work as well, work and culture.

It's incredibly simple but helpful. So if you think about it, then rocks are nature, right? Walls, however, are culture. You can see the difference. River is nature.

A canal is culture. Noise is nature. Music is culture, right? Forest is nature. Agriculture is culture. People are nature, but politics is culture, right?

[16 : 18] Colors, patterns, and shapes are nature. Art is culture, right? Sight is nature. But insight, idea, that's nature.

I mean culture. In all our work, then everything that we do, then we are sub-creators working with what God created and imitating what he did in his act of creation. So then when you as an administrator organize desks and email clutters and facilitate effective communication in your workplace, you are imposing order on creation and working as God did.

You're imaging him and you're glorifying him as you do that. When you create a business and take disparate parts and processes to make a better product available to people, then you are imposing order on creation and working as God did.

When you as a teacher impose discipline and diligence on the students and prepare them also to be sub-creators, you are imposing order on creation, imitating God as you do that.

Students are doing the same thing, right? When you as a medical professional take a disordered or dismembered body and put it back together, make it orderly again, make it whole again, and you are imaging God again.

[17 : 38] You are imposing order on creation. When you write codes to govern a machine and you discover a new way to make things work through engineering, you are imposing order on creation and working as God did.

When you make phone calls for sales, so that you can sell and distribute something that's going to help people in their work and life, you are imposing order on creation.

When you pick up garbage in the streets or dig ditches for sewers, you are imposing order on creation and working as God himself did.

And if that's what work is, then there's something profoundly God-like and dignifying about all forms of work when we do them with the right mindset of representing and resembling God in his work.

So if you are tempted to look down on yourself for the work that you do, because you do a work that society no longer values, then I want you to think about your work in this way. I saw a funny General Electric commercial sometime last year.

- [18 : 53] It was called, What's the Matter with Owen? The Hammer. You guys have seen that? Basically, in the opening scene, there's a burly, bearded father. He's kind of a big, muscular guy. And he's wearing rugged blue jeans and a country plaid shirt.
- And he's holding this huge sledgehammer. And next to him is his wife sitting next to him, very gracious and kind-looking. And then his son is sitting on the other side on the chair.
- And then the dialogue starts. He says, The son is in this geeky pair of black glasses and slacks. And he looks very nerdy. And now the father speaks to him, I'm proud of you, son.
- General Electric, manufacturing. Well, that's why I dug this out for you. It's your grandpappy's hammer, and he would have wanted you to have it. And then he slams it down on the table in front of his son.
- And his mother then looks at him with loving concern and says, It's meant a lot to him. Right. And the son flinches defensively and then replies, Yes, GE makes powerful machines, but I'll be writing the code that will allow those machines to share information with each other.
- [19 : 59] I'll be changing the world. And at which point the father interrupts and asks while shaking his head in disappointment, You can't pick it up, can you? Go ahead. You can't lift the sledgehammer.
- And the mother says with a condescending motherly concern, It's okay, though. You'll be changing the world. Right? I mean, this is a funny commercial that illustrates how our world is changing.
- Right? How different societies and cultures value different skill sets. Right? The son may be a gifted coder, which is highly valued skill today, but a generation or two ago, he would have been pretty useless in a manufacturing job.
- Right? So if you have a job that compensates you extremely generously, and if you have a job that's very valued in our society today, it's because you happen to be born in this particular time and space where that skill is valued.
- It's not all about you. It's not because you're better than everybody else. So that's the reason to be grateful to God, and the reason to be generous with the gifts that God's given you, to be stewards of what He's given you.
- [21 : 04] The fact that you have a higher earning and that you occupy a higher echelon of the society just because of that doesn't mean you can look down on other people. Likewise, if you think that your work is menial, recognize that your work is valued.
- It's dignifying. You're imitating God as you do it. There's no such thing as menial labor. Manual labor is not menial labor. That's why if there ever comes a time when we no longer work because all the robots do the job, then that will be a terribly disorienting and dehumanizing experience because we're created for work.
- We're supposed to worship God as we work. That's why you have things like affluenza, right? Kids grow up with entitlement and wealth and don't have to work.
- They don't know how to function in society. There's still one other crucial part that we were created for. The first part was worship, which entails our work.
- The second part is relationship. Verse 18, It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a helper fit for him. Now, that's a mind-boggling statement if you recognize it in the context of Genesis 1 because all throughout Genesis 1, after each successive stage of his creation, God said, It is good.
- [22 : 28] God saw that it was good. God saw that it was very good at the end of it all. And so after that sevenfold refrain of it was good, as God looks at Adam, the pinnacle of his creation, the man that has the breath of life, the man created in the image of God, God says, It is not good that the man should be alone.

That's the first thing and the only thing in this dialogue that God says is not good. Relationship is so fundamental to the man's constitution that the man not having a companion, God says, is not good.

And so just as he gave the rain and formed the man earlier to account for the barrenness of the earth, God now says, I will make him a helper fit for him to account for the aloneness of man.

And this person that God creates will be man's helper. She's described. The word conveys an assisting, promoting role. So it might initially sound demeaning to us.

A helper, I mean, you think, I don't want to be a helper. I want to be the main show, right? And that's what we're all trained to think. But to be a helper is not a demeaning role at all, right?

[23 : 37] In fact, it conveys a differentiation of roles, but not intrinsic value. The word is used, in fact, most frequently in the Bible to refer to God and his role as a helper of his people.

It's not a demeaning role. It's not a role that's inferior. The word says nothing about whether the person helping is weaker or stronger than the person that's being helped.

The word simply conveys the fact that the person that's being helped is incomplete. He's inadequate. He needs something else. He needs a helper. This is confirmed in the following description.

A helper fit for him. The phrase fit for him can be literally translated as like opposite him. It expresses the notion of complementarity.

Complement with an E, not an I. Complementary rather than identity. The wife is created as a helper fit for her husband, here Adam and Eve. The man cannot fulfill, then, God's mandate to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it apart from the woman.

[24 : 43] And there's probably a strong reference to procreation here because the word helper sounds very similar to the word seed, which is used in the context of Genesis 3. So that's in view.

But that's not the only thing that's in view, multiplying and being fruitful. But also God's call to work and keep the garden to Adam. He can't do that apart from the woman. And this male and female complementarity runs through the entire created order.

We saw that in Genesis 1. Heaven and earth, light and darkness, sky and sea, dry land and water, birds and fish, and then male and female. There's a certain fitness and order to all of creation, and creation of man likewise is the same.

It's meant created to complement each other. And that's why it's unfortunate that the laudable efforts by feminists to secure gender equality and inclusion have come with the collateral damage of minimizing gender distinction.

This wasn't always what feminism was like. In her opinion piece in the New York Times, Dartmouth philosophy professor Amy Allen writes that within the second wave feminism, which was from 1960s to 1980s, there were two conflicting camps within feminism itself.

[25 : 59] Both camps had the same diagnosis of the same problem. They both observed that there was a series of conceptual dichotomies, so reason versus emotion, culture versus nature, mind versus body, and public versus private.

And they correctly noted that there were value attachments to these differences. And all the things that society valued more highly were associated with masculinity.

And all the things that society valued less were associated with femininity. And so they had the same diagnosis, but they had two entirely different prescriptions. The first camp said that the best solution for women was for them to claim the values traditionally associated with masculinity for themselves.

They needed to become more like men by becoming more educated, more active in public life, and less active in the private life of the family. And by becoming more career focused, the women could overcome their disadvantages.

The second camp argued that the first camp failed to challenge the deeply problematic value structure that underlay the discrimination. So they sought instead to bring society to revalue those qualities and activities that have traditionally been associated with women, such as childbearing, mothering, and homemaking.

[27 : 16] And you can guess from around you, looking around you, the first camp won out. And the third wave feminism seeks strenuously to minimize all gender distinction. But according to Genesis 1-2, according to this creation, there are undeniable differences between man and woman.

It's rooted in our biology right from conception. We know pre-born male babies, their brains have a testosterone bath. Their brains are shaped differently from female babies.

The girl's corpus callosum, which is the connection between the right and the left hemisphere, is so much bigger and stronger than their male baby counterparts that she has so much better facility early on with defining words and judging rhymes.

Psychology professors Janet Hyde and Nita McKinley of University of Wisconsin-Madison and University of Washington, respectively, they do meta-research on all the researches on sex differences. So they research the research.

So they aggregate all the researches, account for bias, sample size, and changing social attitudes. And even after their careful research, of all the research and aggregating it, they find that women still tend to have better verbal fluency, and men are better at rotating a three-dimensional object in their heads.

[28 : 39] Dr. Richard Lipa of UCAL writes in his article, Gender, Nature, and Nurture, men have a more independent view of themselves. They view themselves more in terms of their individual achievements, traits, values, and abilities, the ways in which they are unique and separate from other people.

In contrast, women have a more interdependent and connected sense of self. They view themselves more in terms of their relationship with others and in terms of social roles and obligations.

So for this reason, and you guys know this, if you have a relationship with other men and women in your life, that women tend to see communication as a way to connect and enhance the sense of closeness, while men see communication more as a way to accomplish objectives.

Right? So the humorous effect of this is that men feel that there's no need to talk about a relationship that is going well. And women feel that relationship is going well as long as they're talking about it.

Right? I mean, it's true for me and my relationship with him. So women also score higher on self-report scales of empathy. And this was news to me, but Hannah has known this all along.

[29 : 46] And research also shows that women are better at recognizing sadness or happiness in a person's face. Right? Now, these are all generalizations, right, to demonstrate the differences between male and female.

The different genders do have areas of specialized strengths. But, of course, it's a spectrum. Right? And in the spectrum, within the spectrum, even if there are general differences, there are areas that overlap.

And you may be one of those couples or you may be one of those men or women where you're in that area of overlap so that maybe you're a female math professor. Maybe you're a male poet.

Maybe you're a very sensitive and empathetic man or a woman that is not so. Right? I mean, that could happen. But that's why it's important that we recognize that gender and sex is not the same thing.

A gender is a biological reality. That's the platform upon which this distinction and these roles are based. But the sex does not exhaust gender. Gender is a theological reality.

[30 : 51] And that's why even if you as a, if the couples in here, you have overlapping areas of specialization and maybe in that relationship, the woman's more like the man typically and man's more like the woman, you're still called to accept and live in light of God's call for you as male and female, as husband and wife.

The gifting doesn't change that. In the same way, some of us are more timid and conflict-averse by nature. But the biblical command to speak the truth in love, to admonish one another, to evangelize, they all apply to all of us, whether you are naturally gifted in that or not.

That's why Genesis 1.27 tells us, so God created man in his own image. In the image of God, he created him.

Male and female, he created them. Animals also have biological sexes, but they were not created in the image of God as male and female.

Only humans are created in God's image as male and female. So then we didn't create gender. Gender is not a social construct. And both genders, in a complementary way, reflect the image of God.

[32 : 02] And as such, it should be celebrated, not covered up. That's why Eve is described as a helper fit for Adam. Men and women complement each other.

And the plurality of male and female in humanity reveals the plurality within the Godhead, within God of himself. Because remember from last week, it says Genesis 1.25, let us make man in our image after our likeness.

Let us, because God the Father and God the Son, who is the Word of God, and God the Spirit, who is the breath of God, three persons of one God who are working together in creation.

And so likewise, because we're created in that image of the triune God, humanity is supposed to reflect that community and diversity and unity in being male and female.

But Genesis is a masterful narrative and the helper doesn't come immediately. There's a suspense that builds through verses 19 to 20.

[33 : 06] 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.

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.

All the living creatures pass before Adam and Adam names them one by one. Naming throughout Scripture is a ruling function. And so in naming them, the animals, Adam is acknowledging his responsibility over the living creatures as God names his creation in Genesis 1.

But for Adam, there was not found a helper fit for him. It's as if all the other living creatures go by him, but he sees all of them and says, well, everyone has a helper except for me.

Right? So there's a suspense that builds. And then so, and there's a wonderful wordplay because the living creature, haya in Hebrew, is very similar to the name of Eve, which is hawa.

[34 : 12] Right? So there's a, all these living creatures are going, but there's no hawa, there's no Eve. And so that longing, God answers in verses 21 to 22. 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.

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 a beautiful picture of creation, of complimentary helpmate.

Right? She's taken from the man's rib, and like a rib, will always be by his side, standing by him and helping him, bound up with him, body and soul.

That's what that represents, taken from the rib. Bible commentator Matthew Henry puts it in a really eloquent way. He says, not made out of his head to stop him, not out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved.

And when God brings the woman to the man, the man's response is classic. Ordinary prose can't convey his ecstasy when he sees the woman.

[35 : 22] So he bursts out in poetry. Verse 23, 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.

That formula, bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh, is a traditional kinship formula. It's the family language. In English, we speak of blood relations, right? But in Hebrew, they speak of flesh and bone relations.

So here he's saying that she's his kin. Eve is part of, when they're part of his family, his intimate relation. And so this shows that it's not just talking about a random relationship between a man and a woman, but a relationship between a husband and wife.

Right? So God's giving Eve to Adam to be his wife. So if the wife's distinctive role can be summarized by the word helper, the man's distinctive role can be summarized by the word head.

Head helper. We see this in several ways in this passage. First, Adam is created before Eve, and Eve is created out of Adam. In ancient Near Eastern culture, the firstborn of the family was supposed to function as its head.

[36 : 30] This is the logic that Paul uses in 1 Timothy 2, 12 to 13, where he says, in the context of the church family, I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man, for Adam was formed first, then Eve.

Right? So the man's priority in God's creative work entails his headship and the woman's helpship. I made that word up. Now, that's why Paul says in another place, 1 Corinthians 11, 7 to 8, woman is the glory of man, for man was not made from woman, but woman from man.

That's the reason why the word Adam, which is the same word that's used to describe the entire humankind, mankind. That's why Adam is seen as the representative head of the entire human race in Romans 5, 12 to 21, when he says that through Adam, sin came to all of humanity and through Jesus, who is the second Adam, the new representative head, righteousness and justification comes to all creation, all of humanity.

So if that shows what a man is supposed, if this shows that man is supposed to be the head of the wife, what does that look like? What does that mean? Right? We see what it means in Ephesians 5, 28, where Paul commands husbands, husbands should love their wives as their own bodies.

He who loves his wife loves himself. This is such a beautiful picture of the husband's call to love and lead his wife in a sacrificial way. You are not head to lord it over her, but to take responsibility for her and to represent her.

[38 : 07] So much so that by loving your wife, you're loving your own body. Isn't this an ingenious way to turn man's natural selfishness on its own head?

Like, if you don't love your wife, you hate yourself, man. Love your wife. Cherish and nourish your wife. Take responsibility for her and represent her.

But just as the wife's identity as the helper does not suggest intrinsic inferiority, the husband's identity as the head does not suggest intrinsic superiority because the relational pattern in marriage reflects the plurality within the Trinity as we talked about.

That's why it says in 1 Corinthians 11, 3, but I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.

Our relationship in marriage of the male and female diversity reflects the triune God. So even though Jesus, as the Son of God, is equal in deity and power to the Father, He submits Himself to the Father by virtue of His relationship with Him.

[39 : 15] And it's in that pattern that we are called to have the relationship of male and female, of husband and wife, with the man as the head who leads and takes responsibility for his wife, and with the woman as the helper who comes alongside Him to support Him.

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

These two verses, really even just one, the verse 24, is so incredibly insightful for understanding God's ideal for marriage. So first, it says, a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife.

They're both singular, one man and one wife. God intended marriage relationship to be monogamous, not polygamous. There's a sacred exclusivity to marriage that you're not supposed to share with anyone else.

But if we look at Israel's history and our history, we see that this gets violated repeatedly. And Genesis talks about it. The lame man took two wives, Genesis 4.19 says. Solomon had many wives who turned his heart away from the Lord.

[40 : 31] Second, it says, a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife. It doesn't say that a man shall hold on to his husband or a woman shall hold on to her wife.

God created marriage to be intergendered, not monogendered, to reflect the diversity and unity of the triune God himself. So that both genders reflect the wonderful image of God.

And despite God's intention for heterosexuality here, and we find throughout Israel's history and ours, we find homosexuality. The inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah condemned Genesis 19 for that practice from which we get the word sodomy.

Perhaps you've struggled in your life with homosexual orientation or if you haven't, you probably know someone who do. I also have some dear friends who have a homosexual orientation, but if that's you, I plead with you to resist the urge to justify a lifestyle based on that orientation, arguing that you were born that way.

Because first of all, your assessment of that reality might be incorrect. There are now over a half dozen studies that have looked at sexual orientation in identical twins, monozygotic twins.

[41 : 48] And they found that in these population registries, in fact, these researchers have pretty conclusively demonstrated that genetics plays little, if any, role in same-sex orientation.

These are all recent studies. If it's really predominantly nature and not nurture that affects same-sex orientation, then one of the identical twins identifying as homosexual should be a very, very reliable predictor of the other twin becoming, identifying as gay or lesbian.

But the research has shown that it's not a reliable predictor. I have a whole list of them if you really want the citations. And secondly, and more importantly, your desire for something doesn't prove that you should indulge that desire.

The fact that a man or woman has a desire to have multiple spouses does not prove that polygamy or polyandry is okay. God's ideal for monogamy remains.

The fact that a husband or wife has a desire to have sexual relationships with other men and other women does not prove that adultery is okay. God's desire for marital fidelity still remains.

[43 : 01] Mortifying desire, the desires of our hearts that are contrary to God's will for us is how every Christian is called to live every day. and it is possible even for those who struggle with same-sex attraction to have fulfilling intergender marriages.

Sam Andreatis did his whole dissertation on interviewing and doing research among couples, one of them who identifies with same-sex attraction but in intergender relationships.

And he writes about his findings in a book entitled Engendered. I actually ordered some copies of it so you guys can have it available to you next week if you're interested in that. And so the first, monogamy.

Second, intergenderness. And third, durability. It says, a man shall hold fast to his wife. The word to hold fast is a language of covenant. Marriage is a covenant between a man and a woman and it constitutes the beginning of a new family.

That's why it says the man must leave his father and his mother and cling to his wife, cleave to his wife, hold fast to his wife. This doesn't mean you can't have your parents live with you. I mean, a lot of Jews did have their parents live with them.

[44 : 08] But it does mean that your priority needs to shift. Your priority focus is no longer pleasing your parents but it's in pleasing your spouse. And if you don't get that, it leaves a lot of strain.

If the man does not leave his father and mother's household and does not change his priority to primary care for his spouse, it isolates the wife and leads to great stress and strain in the relationship. And this is a radical thing to command in this culture in particular.

I mean, for us it's not hard because in Western culture we don't really take care of our parents anyway. But this is ancient Near Eastern culture where taking care of your parents is seen as second only to being loyal to God himself.

It's one of the highest duties, filial duty to your parents. But he says, leave your father and your mother and hold fast to his wife. That's how intimate and powerful that union is intended to be.

And so if marriage is a covenant then it's intended to be lifelong. It's supposed to be durable not temple. So 1 Corinthians 7, 39 says, a wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives but if her husband dies she is free to be married to whom she wishes only in the Lord.

[45 : 14] Romans 7, 2-3 says, for a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive.

Lifelong durability. Marriage really is supposed to be until death do us a part. But we find again in the history of Israel in our history instead of durability temporality rampant divorce.

Fourth, it says and they shall become one flesh. This implies sexual union but beyond that a profound intimacy and fidelity faithfulness. marriage is supposed to be characterized by fidelity and the husband and wife are supposed to guard their marriage bed and protect their one flesh union but instead in Israel's history and ours we find infidelity pornography and adultery.

The best known incident of course is David's adultery with Bathsheba. So then to summarize God's intention for marriage is first monogamy second intergenderness three durability and fourth fidelity and the first husband and wife were blissfully together in all of these ways in perfect harmony.

That's why verse 25 says and the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. That's a picture of complete trust and intimacy. They have nothing to hide from each other.

[46 : 44] They have nothing to fear in each other and they are unreservedly for each other. That's the picture of marriage that we see here in Genesis. Adam's heart left for joy to see Eve give herself to be his unique and irreplaceable helper.

No one else in all of creation could be his helper. And likewise Eve's heart left with joy to see Adam be his head to take responsibility for her. There really is nothing more beautiful than this if you guys think about it.

I can't begin to speak of what it does to my soul as a man to know that Hannah is my wife and my wife is unreservedly for me. I can't do what I do as a pastor without her.

She's not even here. She's downstairs serving the children's ministry. It motivates me and it gives me courage to think that Hannah's always in my corner rooting for me, sticking with me and holding fast with me in love.

And some of you might not even know this but Hannah has a rare chronic disease called Takayasu's Arteritis which causes inflammation in your arteries and occludes your arteries so she doesn't have blood flow.

[48 : 00] She has very restricted blood flow all throughout her body which means she can't lift her arms up for a while. She can't walk upstairs very well and it also means that almost at any given moment of the day she's really tired, more tired than I'll ever know how to be.

Yet these past two weeks when I've been unusually busy due to travels and weddings and such, she has been my tireless helper and when I'm having to address difficult situations or relationships in church or in meetups she's thinking about me, praying for me and comforting me and caring for my soul.

That's the beautiful picture of marriage. Hannah is, I'm incomplete, inadequate, incapable of fulfilling my call from God without her.

That's why she's the helper fit for me. Marriage is a beautiful reality and you know why marriage is so beautiful? The ultimate reason it's because it points to an ultimate even more beautiful reality.

It's a picture of something. Paul quotes this verse from Genesis in Ephesians 5 31-32. Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife and the two shall become one flesh.

[49 : 13] This mystery is profound and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. The self-giving love of marital union points to the eternal relationship of self-giving love between Christ and the church.

As the book of Hosea reveals it has been God's intention all along since the beginning of creation to marry us, to marry his people, the church, to live an eternal union of life and love with us, to envelop us in the very eternal triune love.

That's been his intention all along to marry us. Trinitarian love, harmony, and unity. And God wanted that intention, that design to be so plain and unmistakable in all of creation that he created male and female.

He created marriage to be a walking picture of that union that God created us for. That's why humanity is so obsessed with sex.

sex is a physical reality that is inextricably tied to that eternal spiritual reality of union with God. That's why G.K.

[50 : 24] Chesterton says, every man who knocks on the door of a brothel is looking for God. And because marriage is a picture of foreshadowing of the greater ultimate reality, there's a remarkable call here for singles as well.

for those of you who are not married. Jesus teaches in Matthew 22, 30, that in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like angels in heaven.

There's no marriage in heaven because the reality, the ultimate reality of union with God that marriage points to is consummated. There's no need for marriage there. So then if you are single currently and you are called to celibacy, chastity, in your singleness for the sake of the kingdom of God, then you are being called to skip, so to speak, the analogy, to skip the picture and to point to that ultimate reality here and now.

You devote yourself, your life, entirely to being a picture of the marriage of the lamb described in Revelation 19. So then, every time you make a decision to make a sacrifice not to date a non-Christian because you know that in that relationship you can't fulfill this image of God, of that relationship of reflecting God's love for us, you are taking a stand and representing that eternal reality of communion with God.

Every time you refuse to give in to licentiousness, to sexual immorality, to having serial relationships, you are standing up for that ultimate reality of being a picture to all those around you saying, you know what, you think that's precious, you think that's pleasurable, you think that's great, but what I have, my relationship with God and eternal union and communion with Him that it points to is far better.

[52 : 13] That's what you're doing every time you make a stance for your chastity and your singleness. And if you are not yet a believer and you're here with us today, you've seen this picture everywhere.

Yeah, the pictures are marred in a lot of ways. Maybe you haven't had good examples in your life, but Christ's love for you is perfect. He is the perfect groom.

He lived the perfect life and He died. He gave His own life to redeem you as His bride. And He works even to this day to sanctify us, make us fit.

Give your life to Him today. That's the most beautiful thing. that's the best thing you could ever have in this life. So let's pray together. God, help us.

Meet with us. Lead us. Strengthen us by Your Spirit so that we may all be as singles and married couples wonderful pictures of Your great initiative to bring us in to eternal union and communion with You.

[53 : 38] In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.