

Imagining The Garden Of Eden (Part 10)

Death and Being Alone

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I hate to start out a sermon on a minor key, but in order to clean up what was left uncovered from my last sermon, I have to broach a subject that might be depressing for some, and that is, death. This subject is basically the subject of man's enemy. Paul calls it "the last enemy," in I Corinthians 15:26. It will be as it says there, the last enemy that is going to be destroyed.

Why this is important to go into now is because Genesis 2:17 contains the first mention of this idea, this understanding of death. It is in the memorable phrase, which we all know, "for in the day that you eat of it (meaning the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge), you shall surely die." That is quite an entrance to be brought into the knowledge of mankind, by this stern warning from God about the effects of sin, the effect of disobedience.

Depending upon how far one wants to take this idea of death, the concept of it can be either simple or complex. At its simplest, death is the termination of the biological functions that sustain a living organism. That is a pretty common definition that you can find in a dictionary or on Wikipedia or something like that. In other words, our bodies and all the processes and functions that keep it alive fail at some point, and we are rendered lifeless. That is pretty simple, pretty basic. We know this happens for various reasons.

I am going to give you a new word here (actually, this sermon has a couple of new words in it), but here is a good one to learn, *senescence*. Senescence means basically aging, or old age. That is obviously one killer of mankind. Some people are blessed enough to die old and in their beds, and hopefully in their sleep, just "pass away" as some say.

Another cause is disease. I do not know if you are aware of this, but probably the most common cause of death is malnutrition. I read somewhere that in 2006, which I believe is the time that the latest figures are available, 58% of humanity that died in that year died from malnutrition.

Another cause is accident, causing mortal injury. That happens on the roads a lot. Suicide, of course, and murder.

So there are lots of different ways that people can die. Those are the general categories

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that they go into. In fact, people are dying so frequently that statisticians have figured out that about 150,000 people die every day around the world.

Like trying to define life, death, particularly the exact time of death, is rather more complicated and very hard to pin down. Usually, it is clinically defined as the cessation of something that goes on in the body. It is either the cessation of consciousness, cessation of breath, cessation of heartbeat, or most commonly these days, cessation of brain activity.

Now even this last one, brain activity (or “brain death” we would call it), is being challenged by thinkers because if you put a human body on a ventilator and keep it supplied with nutrients, the body’s functions continue. Actually, in some cases, they thrive. They can keep a person alive for a very long time by artificial means. So these philosophers say that brain activity is not necessarily a good way to figure out whether or not a person is dead.

But the United States has cut through all of this. In this country, a person is dead, by law, if a death certificate is approved by a licensed medical practitioner. So here in the United States, death legally occurs when a doctor scratches his name on a piece of paper. That is all you need to know, I guess.

Now the Bible does not provide a “thus sayeth the Lord” definition of when death occurs. But I think it is pretty clear, when you go through Scripture, that the Bible does support one particular definition of when death occurs. It sees the cessation of respiration as the time of death.

Let us go to a few of these definitions. I have opened my Bible to Genesis 25:8, the death of Abraham, a pretty important figure. We will be going through the deaths of several very important figures in the Bible, and it is mentioned the same way.

Genesis 25:8 Then Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people.

He was 175. I would say he was a man “full of years.”

Let us move forward to Genesis 35, and we will see the death of his son Isaac.

Genesis 35:29 So Isaac breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people, being old and full of days. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

So he “breathed his last” and was considered to be dead.

Let us go to his son, in Genesis 49. This is Jacob’s death.

Genesis 49:33 And when Jacob had finished commanding his sons, he drew up his feet into the bed and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people.

I do not know if you are aware of this, but this “gathered to his people” is a Hebraism that came about because of the way they did their burials in that time. You remember that Abraham bought the cave at Machpelah where he buried Sarah and later he was buried. And it happened that Israelites, from that point on, tried to bury those who died among them in the same way, in a cave, or in the rock, hew out a cave or crypt out of the rock. If they could not do that, they would often make a box of stone. Sometimes they did this, as well as burying them in the caves, but each family would have one of these stone boxes called an ossuary, meaning a “bone box.”

So they would bury the person in the cave or in the crypt. His body would be displayed on a ledge, and they would allow the body to decay. In the climate, it would decay fairly quickly. It would not be long, within a year or so, and the body would be basically bones. They would then gather the bones and put them in the ossuary. Over time, over generations, there would be a collection of bones in the ossuary, from their fathers, and their father’s fathers, and their father’s fathers. So a person was then “gathered to his people,” to his fathers. So all of the family would be together in death. They would all be buried in the same bone box.

Let us move forward to the book of Job.

Job 14:10 But man dies and is laid away; indeed he breathes his last and where is he?

He is saying that men die, and they breathe their last; it is a parallelism.

Let us go to the New Testament now, because it did not stop just in the Old Testament. We are going to the most important person who ever lived and find how His death was described.

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Mark 15:37 And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last.

Let us see Luke's account in Luke 23.

Luke 23:46 And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, 'into your hands I commit My spirit.'" Having said this, He breathed His last.

So He was considered dead at that point.

Let us go into the era of the early church. In Acts 5, we are going to pick out just two verses in the story of Ananias and Sapphira.

Acts 5:5 Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things.

Acts 5:10 Then immediately she [Sapphira] fell down at his feet and breathed her last. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying her out, buried her by her husband.

We see throughout great stretches of the Bible it seems to be supported that the definition of one's dying is breathing one's last. This only makes sense, because when God breathed the breath of life into Adam's nostrils, back in Genesis 2:7, he became a living being.

Let us go back to Psalm 104, and we will see it very explicitly stated, that just as God gives the breath of life, He also takes it away.

Psalm 104:29 You hide Your face, they are troubled; You take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.

So God giveth, and God taketh away. That is what Job said also.

Job 1:21 The LORD gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed by the name of the LORD.

He gave life, He can take life away.

Now that we have that clear, when God says that Adam will surely die if he eats of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, He means that just as He gave Adam the breath of life, He can just as easily take it back. This applies to all of us, not just to Adam, but to all of us. The death of the soul that sins, as it says in Ezekiel 18:4 and Ezekiel 18:20, is the cessation of breath. That is the end of physical life, after which, as we have seen, the body decays and returns to dust, as it says in Genesis 3:19:

Genesis 3:19 For dust you are, and to dust you shall return.

God then, at that point, retrieves and stores the human spirit. Remember Jesus says, "Into Your hands I commend My spirit." That is also said in Ecclesiastes 12:7, that when one dies, God who gave the spirit takes it back. And as we have seen in the recent Bible studies that I have been giving, dead is dead. In Ecclesiastes 9:5 and Ecclesiastes 9:10, it says that the dead know nothing, and in the grave there is no work or knowledge or any of those things being done, because one is dead. There is no consciousness in the grave. You can also go to Psalm 146:4, where it says essentially the same thing. There is no activity in the grave.

But what about the phrase, "in the day that you eat of it?" That was the other part of the verse in Genesis 2:17 that we did not get to, "in the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die." Now clearly, when Adam and Eve sinned by eating of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, they did not immediately keel over and that was all she wrote. They did not die that day. So what is God meaning by this phrase, "in the day that you eat of it?"

Obviously, the most important word there is "day." That word is *yôm*. It is the same word that we find in the Jewish phrase that they use for the Day of Atonement, *yôm kippur*. The word is *yôm*, day. What makes this so baffling to some is that *yôm* is the most common (it is used 2,355 times in the Old Testament), the most basic, and the most important conception of time in the Old Testament. It is a very important word. It is used in so many different ways that it can be confusing. But it is very important because it is the most basic unit of time in the Old Testament, and a very important one at that.

It designates such wide-ranging elements as the daylight hours, from sunrise to sunset (when the sun is up, it is a day). It is a literal 24 hour cycle, from one sunrise to the next sunrise, or as the Hebrews looked at it, from one sunset to the next sunset. So that is a

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different way of looking at a day, what we would call a solar day, one day of the earth's rotation. It is also used for a generic span of time, a very general space of time. Also, and this makes it really confusing, it can mean a given point in time. So it could mean what we would call a mere moment. It could be several years, 1,000 years, or just an era of time. It can be a celestial day, or it can be the time that we see the sun, we see the light in the sky.

Yôm is also part of the phrase, Day of the Lord, which can help us understand how this is being used. In various places in Scripture, the Day of the Lord is a literal day. It is also, perhaps, a year of time, or a time about a year long. It is also the 1,000 years of Christ's reign, that can also be considered the Day of the Lord. The Day of the Lord can also designate all of future time, under the dominion of God. So you see that even in that simple phrase, the Day of the Lord, a lot of those same definitions are present.

What we come down to is that when *yôm* is used, you have to look at the context to figure out what is meant.

Knowing that Adam and Eve continued to live for nearly 1,000 years (Adam was 960 years old when he died), there are two ways of looking at this "in the day that you eat of it" phrase. The first is that "in the day" implies a span of time that is the limit of their lifespan. God had given them a certain allotted time, and that was their day. We say this a lot, "in *my* day, we used to walk to school barefoot, uphill both ways—in the snow." That is kind of the way that one could look at what He says there, that when they sinned, they would have a certain amount of time to live, and that they would surely die within that allotted time.

We know from II Peter 3:8 that Peter says that to the Lord, a day is as 1,000 years. So you could say there is scriptural backing for this way of looking at it, that God was thinking, well in this particular span of time, they will have their day, and they will die at the end of it, and they will not go outside of that allotted time. In other words, in that day, or in their allotted time, they will surely die.

Now that is actually the less likely of the two possibilities, in my estimation. The second possibility, and I think it more likely, is that it means a literal day, whether you want to call it the time of light, or the 24 hour day. What He means is, in that specific day. Now this may be surprising. How can that be, they did not die in that specific day, they died 960 years later?

The reason for this is that God is not saying that they will die when they eat of the fruit of the forbidden tree, but that on that day, they will have brought the judgment of death on

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themselves by their disobedience. The reason for this, and this is how some modern translations have rendered the last part of this verse, in other words, in the day that you eat of it, you are as good as dead. We know from Romans 6:23 that the wages of sin is death. That has always been the law. That has always been what God has decreed, that at the time someone sins, they automatically incur the death penalty. So they are as good as dead, they would die.

There is a verse in Exodus 32 that might help us to understand this just a little bit. This is after the golden calf incident. Remember, this was a huge sin. God had brought them out of Egypt and brought them to Sinai. Moses went up the mountain to speak with God, and while he was away, the people pulled Aaron out of his tent and made him make a golden calf. And we know that he lit the fire and out of it sprang this calf. They had done some abominable things before this calf, and God sent Moses down. There was a great slaughter there. Moses called all of Israel to him, and only the Levites came, and they slaughtered a good many people. God was "hopping mad," He wanted to just wipe Israel out. Moses interceded, and said please do not do this. This is God's reply.

Exodus 32:33-35 And the LORD said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book." [It sounds very similar to what was said in Genesis 2.] Now therefore, go, lead the people to the place of which I have spoken to you [this is where it begins to help us to understand]. Behold, My angel shall go before you. Nevertheless, in the day when I visit for punishment, I will visit punishment upon them for their sin." So the LORD plagued the people because of what they did with the calf which Aaron made.

Understand what had happened. The sin had occurred in the very recent past, and God pronounced upon them this curse that He would blot them out of His book, for doing what they did. But He said that there will come a day in which He will visit for punishment, meaning their sentence had already been given. They had been judged, and He was going to give them the death penalty. But He delayed it. He put it off until a certain time. Some of them died fairly immediately, when He sent this plague. But as we understand, the way it worked through the whole wilderness period, He killed them off one at a time, all the way through that entire journey. By the time they came to the edge of the Promised Land that whole generation had died in the wilderness.

For some, God gave the death penalty almost immediately. But for others, it was delayed, and delayed, and delayed, maybe for 38 years or so, or 39 or 40, but they all died. At this point, they were like Adam and Eve: they were as good as dead.

Despite the delay, it was as good as accomplished. As you know, Isaiah 55:11 says if God says He is going to do something, His Word does not come back to Him empty. It will accomplish what He has sent it to do.

There is another minor point that needs to be said about the clause “you shall surely die.” It is in the Hebrew what they call a double verb construction. It is literally, “dying you shall die.” To our ears, this suggests that from the day that they sin, they will begin to die, and little by little, their dying will continue until they eventually succumb to actual death. From that time forward, their degeneration toward death began. It began with their first sin. The process was set in motion by their sin, and it in time, in their day, produced death. God’s warning here in Genesis 2:17 is very stern and very sobering. As I said last time, let Him teach us the knowledge of good and evil, and not take it on ourselves to partake of its fruit and receive the awful penalty for sin.

With that covered, we can continue in this series on “Imagining the Garden of Eden”. I never expected it to go this long, but it has. Remember that this is an in-depth study to show how we can employ our God-given imaginations to consider what lies in and behind the Biblical text, yet at the same time, stay within the bounds of what has been revealed in Scripture as a whole. We do not want to be guilty of adding to God’s Word. Although it is alright to speculate a little about things, we should be careful that we do not take our speculations dogmatically, because they are speculations.

Let us read Genesis 2:18 through the end of the chapter, because this actually the beginning of a long paragraph that takes the rest of the chapter.

Genesis 2:18-25 And the LOORD God said, “It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.” Out of the ground the LOORD God formed [it should be had formed] every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him. And the LOORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the LOORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said: “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

As I said, this is a fairly long paragraph. If you go back through chapters 1 and 2, you will find that most of the paragraphs tend to be only two or three verses long. This one is a whopping eight verses long, and the whole thing does make up one subject. It covers Adam's need for a companion, his naming of the animals, the creation of Eve, and their marriage. What is written in this paragraph establishes the basic principles and the boundaries of human marriage. At some point, we will see that Jesus Himself refers to these verses at the beginning of creation to bolster his teaching on marriage and divorce (that is in Matthew 19).

We have to get this next point firmly fixed in our minds. The paragraph begins with "the LOORD God" as the subject and actor. This is critical for our understanding. The LOORD God is the subject of this entire chapter, not just the paragraph, but the entire chapter is about the LOORD God. It is very clear, once you go back through the chapter, that this is the case. This is a very important chapter to human life, to humanity as a whole, and God wants to show that He is the prime mover in all of the things that are good.

Notice, as we go through this chapter that *He* makes the heavens and the earth (Genesis 2:4). *He* forms man and gives him life (Genesis 2:7). *He* plants the Garden (Genesis 2:8). He makes the trees grow (Genesis 2:9), including the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge. He puts the man in the Garden in Genesis 2:15. He gives him life-saving instruction in verses 16 and 17. And He is now the originator of companionship and marriage, as it shows in verse 18 and forward.

We also see in this paragraph a reiteration that He is the creator of all of the animals (verse 19) and that He is also the maker of Eve, and He brings her to Adam as his wife (verses 21 and 22).

So you see that all of these sentences that we have gone through quickly start with "the LOORD God." And then there is a verb, He did something. He did an action in our behalf.

So despite our anthropocentrism (it means "human centered" or "man centered" way of looking at things), this chapter (Genesis 2) is specifically designed to impress on us, among many other things, that God is the prime mover and most important Being to the existence and life of humanity. He is trying to show us, now that we are the way that we are, that we should not be anthropocentric, we should be theocentric, God-centered. He is the most important being.

Immediately, as we begin to read His Book, He wants us to know that He, in the first

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chapter, is the Great God, who made all things by His great power. In chapter 2, He does everything He can to provide for us and to draw us into an intimate relationship with Him. He created the environment and all that is in it, and He then did everything He could, on a micro level, to make things perfect for us, to make it enjoyable for us, pleasurable for us, and good for us as we work through our lives toward His Kingdom.

One way to look at chapter 2 as a whole is as ***God's good-faith effort to reveal Himself performing His part of the covenant with mankind.*** God did this, God did that, God did this thing, God did this other thing. God did all of this. He even brought us our boon companion in order to make life good for us.

Let us go to Romans 1 because I think we need to throw this in here. Remember, I said, this is His good-faith effort to reveal Himself. Romans 1 takes this up. Starting in verse 18, Paul makes a very similar statement. He does not necessarily say that "I got this from chapter 2 of Genesis," but it is very similar.

Romans 1:18-20 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because [this is what is important] what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen . . .

Another way that could be translated is, "for by means of the creation of the world, His invisible attributes are clearly perceived."

Romans 1:20 . . . being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and [divine nature] Godhead...

Interesting, is it not? Not only was it His power to create, but the creation also reveals God's holy character.

Romans 1:20-21 . . . so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God . . .

Sure! Man has known "of God" from the very beginning.

Romans 1:21 . . . because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him

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as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

So once they ignored and rejected God, they began to lose a lot of what they had been shown. But it is still there for them to see. So if anyone cares to look, and really, truly, it is impossible to ignore, the whole creation just screams, "God did this." Or maybe I should put it this way, "God and **only** God did this, and could do this."

Think of all of these things. This is what he shows us in the first chapter and in the second chapter. Here is what He provided for us in the first chapter. There might be some overlap, but He provided us with the earth. He provided us with water. He provided us with air. He provided us with light. He provided us with minerals and other things out of the earth. He provided us with plants and animals and everything else that comes out of the earth.

He also, in chapter 2, put us into an environment that will sustain us, where we actually do not have to do (at least, originally under His plan), all that much hard work. Although because of sin, we have made it harder on ourselves. But He put us into an environment that will sustain us, and He gave us instruction on what to do and what not to do.

And now we see, as we go through Genesis 2:18-25, that He provided for the ability to propagate the species, and the foundation for societal stability and organization, which is marriage. Is there anything that He did not provide, that is good?

So Paul is exactly right when he says, "Look, these things are all out there for anyone to see. And because of that, they are without excuse." No one can say that he did not know, because it is all there, out in the open.

As we touched on in Romans 2:20, it shows there that He also revealed His nature. The creation, and what He did, reveals His divine nature. That is the word that is very stupidly translated "Godhead." It means His divinity, or His divine nature.

What He did, in chapter 2 specifically, but also in chapter 1, revealed that He is a God of love and providence, that He is a God of law and organization. It revealed that He is a God of power and creativity. It revealed that He is a God of thoughtfulness and care. It revealed that God is a God of relationships and growth, and so forth. We could go on, just by looking at some of the things that He did for us. It shows that God was really thinking deeply about us, and what we would need, and He provided everything.

What Paul is getting at is that all of this can be understood, at its most basic level, without the help of the Holy Spirit. It does not take any special help from God to see all of these things in the creation that He did, and therefore, come to some conclusion about what He is like.

So it is not only His eternal power—the fact that He is a great, powerful, majestic creator—but He also is a creator who is loving and holy, giving, providing, et cetera, et cetera. We can extrapolate those things even without the use of the Holy Spirit.

Because it is knowable and understandable, at least to that point, every man and woman on the face of the earth is without excuse. In rejecting Him or ignoring Him, they have put themselves under judgment.

As Paul later says, God simply let them go to do their worse, for the time being. He will take care of them, give them a real chance to accept Him later, once Satan is out of the way in the White Throne judgment. They are not condemned for eternity (most of them, I would say the vast, vast majority of them), but He has just kind of put them aside and let them go their own way.

The point is that God did His utmost, even to the point of making the Tree of Life available. I mean, that is the utmost. God did his utmost to provide for Adam and Eve, and to steer them toward an intimate spiritual relationship with Himself. That was the big goal. He wanted them to eventually take of that Tree of Life, and to join Him in His family, as soon as they would. But sadly, that perfect environment, that perfect situation, did not last very long, due to the foolishness and weakness of our first parents. But we should not be so critical, since in their places, we would have done the same eventually and sadly, probably, most of us would have done it even sooner than they did.

Back to Genesis 2:18, I am going to get to one more principle here, one more specific point throughout the rest of the sermon.

Genesis 2:18 And the LORD God said, “It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.”

It is this first part, “it is not good for man to be alone,” that I want to concentrate on. This is the first time in the entire Bible where God says something is not good. Remember, up to this point He was saying that He had created this, and it was good. And He did that, and it was good. And then in Genesis 1:31, God saw everything that He had made,

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and indeed it was *very* good. He was doing all of these wonderful, very good things, and telling us about them, so that we can understand that they have His approval, and then he gets to chapter 2 verse 18 and He says, “but this is not good.”

Some might say, “Well, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, that wasn’t good,” God did not say that was not good. Actually, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil is not a “not good” thing. It was them taking of the fruit of that tree, taking it to themselves, that made it not good. They did that themselves. God wanted them, as I explained last time, to have a *knowledge* of good and evil, but He wanted them to learn it from His perspective, in His training regimen. If they had done that, they would not have had to eat of the fruit. All of the results of His training of them would have been good. But they decided to take it for themselves, and by mixing what good they had learned from God with the evil that they learned on their own, gave them very bad results.

So even though the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil ended up being what we think of as a bad thing, God did not consider it that. He created it. The first thing that God says is not good is that man should be alone, which is to me, very, very interesting.

Man being alone implies both being single, meaning being one, but not just being one, but being apart. We could call this “separateness.” What God did not like was separateness, standing alone, being alone, being single and one and separate from one’s fellows. He did not like that at all, and so He made it the first thing that He said was not good. Very, very interesting principle.

Man was created as an individual. And think of this, in our own lives, we are born, normally as individuals. Sometimes there are twins, and even twins are born as individuals, when you really think about it, even though they are born together, they are born one at a time (and all of the women who have had twins say “Thank God!”).

We are all born or created as individuals, and that is how we look at ourselves most of the time. We especially look at ourselves that way when we are young. We see ourselves as an individual. Even little babies see themselves that way, and the reason I can say this with any kind of support is because babies are the most individualistic, selfish things that humanity produces. All they want is someone to feed them, to clothe them, to hug them, to clean them up, and do it all over again. They are very self-centered. They are individuals.

But God declares, in no uncertain terms, right here in this very important introductory chapter, that this self-image is not good. That separateness and being alone, that being single, being apart from others, is not good. As we mature, He wants us to move from

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this state of constant self-awareness and self-interest, which in effect is a kind of selfishness or even a form of narcissism (it can get that bad), toward a better, or a good state of intimate companionship or relationship.

Now think about this. When one is single—I am not talking necessarily in terms of a marriage-type thing, being single versus being married, I am just saying being one, being alone, being just separate from others—when one is that way, all one has to think about is oneself. But when one has companionship, it necessitates outgoing concern in some form. You must show some kind of love for that other person. Otherwise, you are maintaining your separateness.

In other words, God wants us to grow or mature from “I” to “we.” Or we could put it another way, from “Me! Me! Me!” to “what is best for *us*.”

Let us see this in a New Testament context. Go to Philippians 2, and obviously this is a very well-known scripture. Paul puts it in very clear terms here.

Philippians 2:3-5 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. [Very next sentence] Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.

Ha, ha! Is that not interesting? Jesus was the perfect man. Jesus was an individual when He was born, but do you know what? He was never alone. He had the fullness of God’s Spirit from the very beginning. He was one, but He knew, however He knew it, that He was always in companionship with you-know-who, His Father. That made Him distinctly different. And do you know what? That distinctly different state is what we are maturing into, “put[ting] on the mind of Christ.” The great part of that putting on the mind of Christ is becoming, not alone, but part of a relationship. Not an individual, but a part of a family, of which marriage is the first part.

So what we are doing as maturing Christians is exactly what God was starting to explain in Genesis 2:18. It is not good for man to be alone. Now why?

Man, by himself, is incomplete, unfulfilled, and lacking in much that he was created to be. He is created as a blank slate, and there is a lot of finishing, a lot of maturing, a lot of completing that needs to be done. So he cannot stay alone. He is, by creation, a social creature.

Now how do I know this? How do I know that he was made to have and enjoy and develop relationships with other people? Because of the things that God gave him. A mouth to speak and language; mind; and the thing that we fail to do a lot, hear. He was given two ears to hear, to listen. In just these few things, it is obvious then that he was made to interact with other people. He was made to speak to them, given one mouth, but he was given two ears, so that he could hear better. So that he could spend twice as much time listening as speaking. James says something to that effect in James 1.

These abilities to communicate show that he was made to be a social creature. Even the most hermit-like person needs the company of other people, and if he says he does not, he is denying himself and lying. It is difficult even to survive without the help of other people. We always need something that another person must produce, even the hermits. Even though people often rub us wrong because they are different, or they have different ideas or whatever, we still need social interaction with them. It is just a fact of life, that is the way things are.

Solomon has something interesting to say in this matter. Let us go to Ecclesiastes the fourth chapter. Ecclesiastes is one of my favorite books. It has climbed from one that I always dreaded to one that I really like. I dreaded it because Solomon seems so “down” through it all, “ah, this is vanity, this is awful, this is misery!” But he teaches some very valuable lessons, and this is one of them.

Ecclesiastes 4:8 There is one alone, without companion: he has neither son nor brother [no wife or sister either]. Yet there is no end to all his labors, nor is his eye satisfied with riches. But he never asks, “For whom do I toil and deprive myself of good?” This also is vanity and a grave misfortune.

It says in the margins in my New King James that “this is an evil task.” He is saying that being alone is a terrible thing.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up. Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm; but how can one be warm alone? Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

So he is starting to expand out, “hey, if two is good, three is good also, three might be

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better, and four, and five.” That is the idea we are supposed to be getting. This relationship between two grows to three, and then to four, and then to five, and then it starts to multiply out until we have a great family, or a great community.

Solomon shows here just what a grave misfortune it is to be alone, and he is speaking mostly in a physical sense. For a person who is alone, his work is all toil, and he has no one to share it with. A companion, though, will give him help where it is needed, especially when times are bad, and times seem to always be bad. We just never seem to get it quite right. Because of that, two are better than one. Two can get through a misfortune, where one might give up.

Some commentators believe that his idea about “a threefold cord is not quickly broken,” that the third cord in this rope is God Himself. He is speaking mostly of the marriage relationship here, you have a man who is no longer alone, because he has a wife, and those two are able to handle a great deal. But if they have the third element of God in their marriage with them, they can withstand anything. That is how it is supposed to be in a truly good, Christian marriage.

Notice John 8. It is always good to touch bases with the Savior here on these matters. He actually comments on something of this nature. He is speaking about judgment here, but I want to pull out what He says. He tells the Pharisees:

John 8:16 And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent Me.

John 8:29 And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.

Even though Jesus seemed to be alone, against all of his persecutors, even though His disciples ended up forsaking Him, and leaving Him physically alone, He was never really alone. All through His ministry, all through His life as I mentioned before, He had the Father as His companion—His constant companion.

Even Jesus could not stand alone, as a man, but needed the Father to help Him through with His grievous trials, and even during His everyday life of perfection. It was God’s presence with Him that enabled Him to live a life of perfection. On the other hand, Jesus made sure God was with Him by continuing to do the things that pleased Him.

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He did not drive the Father away, like Adam and Eve had driven Him away, through their sin. That is what happened at the end of Genesis 3. He said, "Out you go, leave the Garden. I am putting My cherubim here so you can't get back in. Your sins have separated between you and Me."

But Jesus, the second Adam, was so much smarter, so much holier, so much more righteous, He did not drive His companion away through sin. He always did those things that pleased His companion. And He stuck with Him, always, until that point where all of the sins of the world were dropped upon Him, and then He was sin, as it were.

I think about people who are out there trying to go it alone, to be independent, why in the world would they try to do that? I do not understand it. If Jesus could not do it alone, how do they think they are going to do it alone? It just boggles my mind.

So it was not good for man to be alone for another reason, actually I have two other reasons. And that is because if man remained alone, there would have been no chance for there to be more human beings. A very practical reason. "It takes two to tango," as it were, and like the animals, Adam needed a mate. He needed a "man with a womb." Do you know that that is exactly what the word "woman" means in English? "Womb-man." Man with a womb. It does not mean that in Hebrew, it just implies a female man (*'ish* and *'ishshah*). There needed to be one to propagate the species. Otherwise, how could humanity fill the earth and subdue it? That is one of the commands that God had given in Genesis 1:28. So there needed to be a woman with the man.

Let us take this up a notch. God is reproducing Himself, and He had determined that He was going to reproduce Himself through His church, yes, and through humanity at large. It will not stop just with the church; it is going to be all of humanity. But how is He to do that with one man? It just was not going to work, there had to be more humans created, and so a woman was necessary.

Let us go to John 1, and we will see that this idea of God reproducing Himself appears here.

John 1:12-13 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

See, we were born of a woman. But there is another birth where we have to be born of

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the will of God. That takes place at conversion.

Romans 8:16-17 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

II Corinthians 6:17-18 Therefore “Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LOORD Almighty.”

So in terms of God’s plan, it was not good for Adam to remain alone. He needed a helpmeet, he needed a woman who can bear his children, and fill the earth and subdue it.

Finally, this is also in terms of God’s plan, He had already determined that He would redeem mankind from sin and add them to His Family. And how was He going to do this? Through the Seed of the woman. In Genesis 3:15, this is in the curse on the serpent:

Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity between you [the serpent] and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.

Already by this time, it is very clear that the Redeemer would come; He would be the Seed of the woman.

Galatians 4:4-7 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

It was determined, even at this early stage and probably earlier, that He would be born as the Savior and become the sacrifice for sin and the means to eternal life. The only

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way that could be done is if there was a woman. Thus Adam could not remain alone without his helping companion, Eve. She must be created.

Let us finish in Matthew 19. I just want to mention this so that we can close this off. This is just after He had been speaking to them about marriage and divorce.

Matthew 19:11-12 But He said to them, "All cannot accept this saying, but only those to whom it has been given: for there are eunuchs who were born thus from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He who is able to accept it, let him accept it."

Now this seems to be a contradiction of "man shall not be alone, it is not good that man should be alone." Perhaps Jesus included this because of His reference to Genesis 2 in earlier verses here, and it made Him think of Genesis 2:18 where it says "it is not good for man to be alone."

There are some who choose to live without a mate for various reasons. For some, it is not physically possible, and this is a shame, but it happens. There are birth defects, there are problems like He says here, "eunuchs from their mother's womb." That is a shame, but it does happen.

Some people are indeed not suited for marriage, unfortunately, either because of their disposition, their background, a handicap, whatever it happens to be. That is very unfortunate, they have to learn to accept that.

But He includes a category here of those who choose to remain alone, and they choose this as their way of life. He qualifies it here, that if it is for the purpose of doing God's work and will, then fine. Just as the person has accepted that, then we have to accept it too. Some believe the apostle Paul was like this; maybe, maybe not. He as a member of the Sanhedrin it seems, and usually those were required to be married. So perhaps he had been married at some point in his life and his wife died young, but we do not know. All we know from what is written in the Bible is that he was not married during that time, or at least there is no indication that he was.

But there have been some who have decided not to marry and give themselves to the work of God. Jesus implies that we should not condemn somebody for making this choice, even though God says that it is not good for man to be alone. But He also

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implies here, pretty strongly, that this is not to be the “norm.” That it is really best for a man to be married, and a woman too. If marriage is desired and the right one comes along, it is a good thing, physically, and socially, and spiritually. So no one should hinder that unless there are some real good reasons for why they should not marry.

As Paul writes in Hebrews 13:4, marriage is honorable among all. It is an integral part of God’s design for humanity, and as we have seen today, has been from the very beginning.