

Gender, Sexuality, and the Glory of God

Part 2 – “The Two Shall be One”

Genesis 2:18-25

God designed marriage. It was his idea from the beginning to accomplish specific goals and bring about specific blessings. Therefore the boundaries that God sets around marriage are binding and must be honored lest marriage be stripped of the very blessings it was designed to provide.

Main Idea: God designed marriage and defined its' boundaries for His glory and the joy of mankind.

1. God designed marriage to be a blessing.

One of the ways the creation account serves us is by teaching us the way things are supposed to be. We must always be on guard from the temptation to conclude that the way things are, are the way things are supposed to be. One of the lessons we are taught in Genesis 2 is that even in Paradise it is not good for man to be alone (vs. 18). God created marriage to be a blessing both to humanity and the whole earth.

a) *Marriage is a blessing for mankind.*

- Vv. 18, 23
- Adam's words come forth in poetic form. It is an exclamation of praise in response to God's good gift of companionship.
- Vs. 24 – The one flesh union is intended both as a means to fulfill the creation mandate and to deepen the companionship of the husband and wife.
- Vs. 25 – Physical intimacy was entirely pure and untainted by sin. There was no cause for shame or hiding for there was no sin.

b) *Marriage is a blessing to the earth.*

- Gen 2:15 – “The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.”
- It is not until after Adam received the mandate to exercise dominion over the earth that he is given “a helper.”
- “Marriage is given to enable humankind to exercise responsible dominion over God's world.” – Christopher Ash
- One of the chief ways that marriage blesses the earth is through conceiving and raising children if the Lord gives a husband and wife that gift (1:28).

2. God designed marriage with a pattern.

- Vv. 22-23 – “And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said,

‘This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called Woman,
because she was taken out of Man.’”

- God's provision for the man is woman. This pattern is referenced no less than four times in verses 22-25.
- Adam observed throughout Paradise that each animal had a complementary partner, one that was alike and different in needful ways. Now with the creation of the woman Adam has a helper who is like him in all the necessary ways. And yet she is also different from him in ways that make possible the creation mandate and intimate companionship. This pattern of male and female in marriage is never deviated from in God's prescription for humanity.
- The pattern of male and female in marriage is never held forth as one option among others. Humanity is never invited to alter this Divinely-given pattern. To change the pattern is to fundamentally undermine the very blessings marriage was designed to provide.

3. God designed marriage with a sequence.

- Vs. 24 – "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."
 - a) *A man shall leave his father and mother* – Marriage means a change of relationship with one's family.
 - b) *A man shall hold fast to his wife* – The relationship between husband and wife is to be indissoluble for as long as they both live.
 - c) *And they shall become one flesh* – The relationship between husband and wife is designed to be the closest of all human relationships maintained and deepened by physical intimacy.

4. God designed marriage with an order.

- Genesis 2 introduces us to God's pattern of complementary roles for husband and wife. These complementary roles are further supported and explained elsewhere in Scripture.
- Ephesians 5:22-33 – Marriage is a picture of Christ's relationship with his church. The husband conforms to Christ by leading in a way that is self-sacrificing for the good of his wife just as Christ leads his church. The wife conforms to Christ by following her husband's leadership voluntarily as the Son followed the leadership of His Father. It is not a submission that comes from inferiority or coercion. It is, rather, a voluntary act of sacrificial love just as the husband's Christ-like leadership.

Questions for Family Discussion:

- Whose idea was marriage?
- What are some of the reasons God designed marriage?
- What are some of the ways marriage is a blessing?
- Why is it that marriage may only be between a man and a woman?
- What are some of the things Ephesians 5:22-33 teach us about marriage?