



Suitable Helper

Genesis 2:18-25

By Pastor Paul Hudson
Oct. 26th, 2025

*** This original sermon was not written by A.I.*

We're continuing in Genesis 1-4, "The Beginning," and we've come to chapter 2:18-25. Last week I put together a basic theology of work derived from these opening chapters of Genesis. For review, God's design of work consists of five foundational pillars: Dominion, Provision, Fruitfulness, Boundaries, and Relationships. And I established that God is both our Provider and Sustainer.

This morning, we've come to the creation of the woman, which the Bible describes as a "suitable helper" to the man.

I invite you to open to Gen. 2:18-25.

Genesis 2:18-25 (NIV).

18 The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

19 Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. 20 So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals.

But for Adam no suitable helper was found. 21 So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. 22 Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

23 The man said,

"This is now bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called 'woman,'
for she was taken out of man."

24 That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

25 Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

The Word of God for the people of God.

Let's Pray.

The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a suitable helper for him." This is the first time we see God saying, "it is not good." Up to now, God has only declared everything he has made, "good." After he created both male and female, he declared his

creation “very good.” Here, with only one man living alone on the earth, God looked and said, “this is not good.” “Man should not be alone.”

Now, we know that Adam only lived part of one day without Eve, since God created both male and female on the 6th day. Still, this is an interesting declaration in the sense that Adam was not really alone. He had the animals, which he called by name. He might have been the dog’s first best friend! Most importantly, Adam wasn’t alone because God was with him.

So, the Scripture isn’t really talking about the man being stuck on earth by himself. What this really means is that man did not yet have a corresponding opposite, so to speak, to himself who shared the same “made in the image of God” distinction with him. He did not yet have someone to relate to in all of his humanity, or who could become an equal partner with him in fulfilling the command to be fruitful and multiply.

God’s answer was the creation of the woman, but really, this applies to humans in general. God never intended for any person to be alone. He designed us to live in relationship—I don’t mean marital relationship for everyone, but relationship, nonetheless. The psychological effects of isolation and loneliness are well documented. We were not made to live in isolation. God made us to engage in social relationships.

This is where the church can really stand out in society. Church is definitely the place we come together to worship God and hear his Word, but I think one of the most important functions of the church is relationships. Number 1, relationship with God, and number 1.2, relationship with others. I’ve said this before, but church needs to be a place where you should be able to find some of your best friends. It shouldn’t be a place where you only find religion or merely come to be served!

Church is not about your relationship with God only, and I hope you don’t treat church that way. If you do, I want to encourage you to see the people sitting around you as potentially some of the best friends you will have ever had. Make time to get together and spend quality, friendship time with one another. Build those relational connections and don’t be afraid of it!

There may be massive differences between you and those you see around you in the church. That is totally ok! Whether it’s age, gender, lifestyles, or preferences, political differences, don’t let perceived differences stop the budding of what could end up becoming a beautiful, God-given friendship. I believe God has made the church to be a place of thriving friendships, not just a place where we come to meet with God.

Don’t forget, God was already with Adam when he said, “man should not be alone.” God didn’t say to Adam, “I’m all you’ll ever need. It’s just you and me, baby!” Well, later on, God does indeed reveal to humans that he is truly all we need, but at first, God did not try to get Adam to see that the human race is complete with just God and him. No, God all but confirmed that man is only one half of the equation. And beyond procreation, humans are meant to have fellowship and friendship together in a dependent relationship with Christ. The church should shine as the most viable place to make those kinds of healthy friendships. I can’t preach this enough.

You might see the church as a place to serve God. Yes, that is a function of the church and the direction we are trying to go. The church gives opportunities for you to serve God, but I want

you to not only think about serving God. Instead, think about serving God with your friends, and take the opportunity to make new bonds of friendships with your fellow co-workers for God.

When your service is finished, don't leave the bond of friendships behind. I urge you not to contextualize your church relationships by keeping them separate from your "real" friendships outside the church. Stay connected outside of church and make time together as friends do. And be sure to keep God at the center. Never underestimate the demons that can come out when Christian friends get together outside the church!! Keep God at the center.

When God calls you to serve in the church, I will venture to say that God is really calling you to relationships and friendships, not only service. Not just with your co-workers or with those you are serving, but also with those you find yourself ministering to. Don't ever let your service in the church over-ride your relationships. Let your service lead you into deeper, more meaningful friendships with one another. Amen! I'm sorry if that was a long rant, but I am passionate about the church being a place for friendships!

In fact, I want to stop and pray right now for anyone here who is coming to church or watching online but who is battling loneliness. Maybe you don't have a friend right now, and you have a hard time engaging with people long enough to build a friendship. I pray for you in Jesus' name. I ask the Lord to bless you with a friend in this church. A friendship that comes along naturally. Lord, I pray that you will open the door for the ones who are feeling alone and isolated right now. Will you bring that human friend into their life and cause a friendship to grow and thrive. Let it be a newfound blessing that lasts a lifetime. We pray this in the name of Jesus, Amen.

God said, "it's not good for man to be alone. I will make a suitable helper for him." This term, "suitable helper" warrants some deeper investigation in the original language. In Hebrew, this term is "עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ" (Ezer ke negedo) from the root "neged," meaning a comparable helper.

Now, Ezer is the word for helper. The core meaning is "help" or "assistance," and nowhere does this term imply subordination. In fact, this is the same word used to describe God in Psalm 54:4, "surely God is my Ezer (my helper); the Lord is the One who sustains me." Many other Scriptures in the OT use this same term to describe our relationship with God. Nobody would consider God a subordinate right?

Ezer means helper, not subordinate, and the classifier makes this even more clear. Neged, translated in the NIV as "suitable," is more literally translated as "that which is opposite," or "that which corresponds appropriately." The term is well translated as suitable, but it speaks of proper human compatibility; human companionship; human relationship; a human sounding-board; a human voice of reason in the ear; the voice telling you to mow the lawn just as you sit down to watch the game; the voice saying, "I told you so...." ;)

The suitable helper is the relationally and physically compatible partner. Considering that God created both male and female together on the 6th day in his own image, there is no hint of the domination of one sex over another in God's original design. God's original design has the two working together as complimentary opposites, like pieces of a puzzle.

The rule or dominance of the husband over the wife was a direct result of the fall; However, the good news is that Lord Jesus has redeemed us entirely from the curse of sin. Jesus now fulfills the dimension of headship by being the head of the husband and the wife, so both husband and

wife live together under the rule of Christ. On a spiritual level, Christ has made both male and female equal so there is no distinction between the two. This does not mean that the fleshly differences between male and female do not matter anymore. The pre-fall distinction still exists. God created the woman to be a complimentary, equal opposite to the man.

Let's continue on. So, God said, "I will make a complimentary opposite, a suitable helper" so that man won't be alone, and he then brought all the animals and birds for Adam to name. God bringing these animals was not merely to have Adam give names to them, he was helping Adam to notice the pairing of the sexes. As each of the animals so naturally paired off with one another, each in their own kind, it surely would have dawned on him that he was without a suitable pairing of his own kind. In fact, that was the exact result.

After Adam named all the animals brought to him, the Scripture says, "But for Adam no suitable helper was found." In other words, Adam recognized his need and perhaps desire for a complimentary opposite of his own kind just like all the animals he had just named. This is where the Lord goes to work. He sent Adam into a deep sleep and performed the first ever surgery on a human. How old were you when you had your first surgery? Adam was not even a day old!

God took a rib, sealed up the flesh, and from the rib made a woman. I love this story. There are a couple words I want to highlight from the Hebrew that you won't see in English, concerning the making of the man and the woman. In chapter 2:7, God formed the man from the dust of the ground. Now, the word translated "formed" is "yatser" and it means to shape, form, or fashion like a potter. It conveys a fairly simple and straightforward approach. The picture of a potter is perfect because whatever the potter forms with his hands is pretty much what you've got.

Alright, now the word for God's creation of the woman is different. It is not "yatser," it is "banah" which means "to build," like a royal architect. Banah implies a much greater complexity than yatser. Royal architecture is a great picture—with royal architecture you know that there are going to be a lot of surprises and depth of meaning under the surface—hidden structures supporting aspects you'll never see unless you're let inside. On the other hand, a potter pretty much makes what you see—there might be a big hole on the inside, that's about it—otherwise it's just clay—no royal architecture. Not to imply that men are inherently shallow, we know they're not!

God formed men but he built women. All humor aside, this term is also used in relation to the building of a generation of offspring, so it is indeed a more complicated word that implies much more than what meets the eye!

The second observation I want to make about the woman is that God took the rib from Adam's side and not from anywhere else. The theologian Matthew Henry said it this way, "Not made out of his head to top 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."¹ On his side, under his arm, and near his heart. Such a beautiful picture. Those who think the Bible disrespects women need to read it again. The creation narrative yields the highest respect for women.

¹ David Atkinson, *The Message of Genesis 1–11: The Dawn of Creation*, ed. J. A. Motyer and Derek Tidball, *The Bible Speaks Today* (England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1990), 71.

So, after God built the woman, he brought his masterpiece to Adam and Adam responded with probably the most romantic words ever, “this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, for she was taken out of man.” This was an ancient way of saying, “you complete me.” Adam was now paired with a complimentary companion and all those plans to turn the garden into a sweet man-cave went up in smoke.

Verses 24 and 25 say, “that is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.” And they were both naked and felt no shame. This is essentially the biblical foundation for marriage (not man-caves going up in smoke but a man leaving his parents to be united with his wife). A whole three-point sermon could be preached on this one passage, but I just want to touch on three points quickly to end.

First, to leave your father and mother indicates the formation of a new family unit. Different cultures apply different principles for maintaining the family structure. Buddhist cultures, like Thailand, maintain a very hierarchal structure in which the family unit is fundamentally led by the parents of the wife basically until they die. The western culture is more closely aligned with the idea of the new family unit obtaining independence from their parents. However, in today’s America, it is increasingly more common to see parents living with a married child. The Bible does not mandate the formation of a new family away from the parents, but it does support the formation of the new family unit under the parental headship of the husband and wife.

Second, the man is united to his wife. Many scholars understand this to mean covenantal partnership; specifically, a consecrated marriage. Certainly, Jewish marital law is founded upon this Scripture. Covenants are vital to the Bible’s message and to our relationship with God. Through the sacrifice of Jesus, God has entered into a binding, eternal covenant with us that ensures our salvation and a restored relationship with him. The binding covenant gives us the assurance of safety and protection, and it is a promise that we can rest in. Similarly, the marriage covenant is meant to be a binding, public promise to one another where the two unite together in a covenantal partnership.

Many young adults today are cohabitating, and they do not see the purpose behind a marriage certificate. Well, despite whatever one-to-one promises the two have made to each other, the relationship is not secure until a legal covenant is made and committed to in the presence of witnesses, and that is what a marriage certificate is for. Without that public commitment, the relationship can be too easily broken off, and I hope anyone in a cohabitating relationship listening to this understands. A relationship without a tangible, legal commitment is simply a relationship, it is not like a binding marriage, and therefore, you should both protect yourself by not pretending to be married. If you’re cohabitating and you’re certain about your relationship, get married! Otherwise, for your own sake, don’t pretend you’re married.

Finally, the two become one flesh. This is certainly talking about the children, but it is also talking about the nature of the two being united together. I heard an analogy I thought was great on this— the two becoming one flesh is like two rivers joining together. At the point of confluence, the waters experience great turmoil and turbulence. Further downstream as the two waters settle into each other, the river flows peacefully as one river. Two becoming united as one flesh takes a great deal of time, and patience. And a willingness to come together as if there is no other way but to work together. Once the two settle into each other, they will flow together peacefully as one. Amen!

Here are three application points for you to consider this morning:

1. We Are Created for Relationship, Not Isolation.

- a. Don't live your faith out in isolation. Make intentional efforts to build genuine relationships in the church. Participate in fellowship, reach out to those who are lonely, and let your friendships become an expression of God's love.**

2. God's Design for Relationships Is Rooted in Equality and Complementarity.

- a. Honor and respect the God-given dignity of others, especially across differences. In marriage, friendship, and ministry, seek partnership, not power. Let your relationships reflect God's design— work together as equals under Christ's headship.**

3. 3. Godly Relationships Reflect Covenant Commitment.

- a. In marriage, friendships, and church life, maintain your commitments. Be dependable, forgiving, and patient. Just as God keeps His covenant with us, let your relationships mirror His steadfast love — even when it takes time and work for unity to grow.**

Let's pray.

Observation

1. According to Genesis 2:18, what is the first thing in creation that God declares “not good”? Why is this significant?
2. What process does God use to show Adam his need for a “suitable helper” before creating the woman?
3. How does Adam respond when he first sees the woman God has made? What does his response reveal about their relationship?

Interpretation

1. The sermon pointed out that Adam was not truly alone—he had God and the animals. Why, then, does God say it is “not good” for man to be alone? What does this teach about God’s design for human relationships?
2. The Hebrew phrase “suitable helper” (*ezer kenegdo*) was explained as meaning an equal and complementary partner, not a subordinate. How does this understanding challenge or affirm common views about gender roles in relationships?
3. The sermon described the church as a place for deep, meaningful friendships, not just religious activity. What might it look like for a church to truly live this out?
4. The idea of “becoming one flesh” was compared to two rivers merging—sometimes turbulent at first, but eventually peaceful. How does this image help us understand the process of unity in marriage, friendship, or church life?

Application

1. The sermon emphasized that our need for others is not a flaw, but part of God’s design. Are there areas in your life where you tend to isolate yourself? What is one step you could take this week to move toward deeper connection with others?
2. Think about your relationships within the church. Do you see them as genuine friendships or mostly as acquaintances? What could you do to intentionally build a deeper friendship with someone in your church family? What about generational, ethnic, or gender differences?
3. The phrase “suitable helper” speaks of equality and complementarity. In your closest relationships (marriage, friendship, ministry), do you tend to seek partnership or do you fall into patterns of control or passivity? What would it look like to work together as equals?
4. The process of “becoming one” can be turbulent and takes time. Can you think of a relationship (marriage, friendship, or church) where you are in a season of “turbulence”? What practical steps could you take to move toward greater unity and peace?
5. The sermon included a prayer for those battling loneliness. If you are feeling isolated, what is one way you could let others know or ask for help? If you know someone who seems lonely, what is one thing you could do this week to reach out to them?