

Genesis in Biblical Perspective
The Gospel of Christ from Genesis
The Covenant of Intimacy: God's Blueprint for Marriage – Genesis 2:18-25

This is the word of God. Genesis 2:18-25.

18 Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." **19** Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature that was its name. **20** The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. **21** So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. **22** And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. **23** Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." **24** Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. **25** And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

May God bless this His Word to the heart of His people.

There absolutely no doubt that the institution of marriage as Biblically revealed and declared is under assault today in society. It is under the assault of destruction and now under assault of destruction by reconstruction in redefining marriage. It is under assault by the elite media, academic communities, performing communities and culture shapers. The culture shapers have certain culture shaper instruments that they use. There is also no doubt that the culture is conforming the practice of marriage in the church more than the Word of God in this day and age. There is little doubt that the practice of marriage is being conformed more by the shapers of the culture in the church than by the truth of God's transforming Word. The prevalence of divorce, the reasons for it, the response to it, the use of sexuality outside of marriage, premarital and extramarital are not something that is just out in the world but it is something that has pervaded and is permeating the professing church today.

Those culture shapers are very powerful. Today's culture is filled with narcissism, the idolatry of self, "me." These people think, "It's all about me, it's all for me therefore whatever relationship I'm in it's all about me and it's all for me." The church today is buying into that. These people think "My marriage is all about me and for me" and as soon as a spouse or marriage is no longer considered helpful or desirable for self then it can be discarded. The culture has embraced that and the church is following hard after it. There is not only the idolatry of self that is destroying, redefining and deconstructing marriage but there is also the fact of the idolatry of marriage, that marriage or the marriage partner is the meaning to one's life. Therefore people are on a constant search for marriages and partners that will give meaning to their life when only Jesus Christ gives that meaning to one's life. There is also the idolatry of sexuality. In

today's age sex is presented in a messianic form, as the messiah. The culture gives the idea that one needs the perfect body to be perfectly desirable and that sexuality is something that must be embraced at all costs. When one gets to the idolatry of sexuality it leads them to promiscuity. When that does not meet the bill one goes from the idolatry of sexuality to promiscuity to sexual perversion. Today's society is in that death spiral and all of that is reaching right into the church. It is conforming the church and pressing it into its mold instead of the transforming truth of God's Word. What is the answer?

The answer is not new. Whenever God's law is present the sinful nature and the world will always rebel against it. It was no different when Jesus walked this earth. Marriage was under assault then and divorce had become commonplace for any reason at all thus the disciples asked Him, "Jesus is divorce appropriate for any reason at all?" In Mark 10:6-9 Jesus gave this answer, **6** *But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.'* **7** *'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife,* **8** *and the two shall become one flesh.'* *So they are no longer two but one flesh.* **9** *What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."* When Jesus dealt with the cultural deprecation and destruction of marriage in His day He did not do it with an exotic formula, He took them back to the blueprint of marriage and started there in Genesis 2:24. And He did not go to the world to tell them to shape up on marriage first, He went to His covenant people and said, "You come back to the Word of God. It starts with you."

Paul does the same thing when he goes to Ephesus. He gives the most powerful doctrine of Christian marriage which begins in Ephesians 5:22 and goes through Ephesians 6:4. In the midst of this passage Paul quotes one text from the Old Testament which is Ephesians 5:31, *"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."* Brothers and Sisters I do not believe the answer begins with a conference on the seven steps to an enjoyable marriage because one may be looking for marriage for the wrong reasons and the wrong purpose. There may be the idolatry of a spouse or the idolatry of marriage. I do believe there are things that can be taught from the Bible about how to be a husband and wife that is effective for the Lord but we cannot build a sandcastle in the sky. We have to come back to God's blueprint for marriage. Start at the beginning.

Marriage is not a socially evolved institution. It is what God built into creation. It is a creation law. Any society that destroys it, deconstructs it or reconstructs it is a society that will not last. For instance, the discussion happening now of homosexual marriage, there has been no nations to survive beyond four generations that has given social approval to such relationships. There is no nation that can outlast the destruction of marriage whether it is by destruction, reconstruction or deconstruction. So where does one go? One does not go to the world first but to God's Word first and God's people first. People need to come to truth and truth needs to transform people. People cannot expect a world philosophy that has been against God to conform if the salt and light of God's people is not present. If Christians are being conformed and

shaped by the culture then the culture will continue in its death spiral. It must begin at work within the Christian.

For a brief review the doctrine of creation has been studied thus far and from each study in the book of Genesis a transformational truth has been extracted that will transform one's life. So this is what has been learned from the doctrine of creation. Transformational truth number one deals with God's agenda in creation and redemption. First, God made a home and then a people. In redemption because sin entered the world, God's Son, Jesus is making a people and then a Home, a new heavens and a new earth, all for His own glory.

The second transformational truth is a precious gift from God to His people called the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a God-given creation law that reveals both the majesty of God and the providence of God. Jesus now invites us to His throne room by allowing us to enjoy the Lord's Day, to worship, be refreshed and renewed in the Lord after six days of labor.

The third transformational truth is that God made man uniquely significant. Remember the pattern; the garden, Eden and then the world that was in chaos to be ordered by man. In order to step into the world of wilderness to serve the Lord one needs to step from the nourishment of Eden and step into Eden from the garden where the presence of God is. Thus as God's people were taken out of Egypt they had the tabernacle where they met with God. Then the camp of God's people and then He took them through the wilderness to the Promised Land. So it is with us today in our lives. The church of Jesus Christ needs to be that special place where God people gather and are refreshed. One's own personal life is a garden as the Holy Spirit comes and dwells within one's heart; rest and refreshment to step into a world to serve Him. That is what one's family and home can become, a place where the presence of God dwells, a place of order, rest, refreshment and renewal.

Now comes the four transforming truth and that deals with marriage. It is the covenant of intimacy where God has established a special relationship for us. Why is marriage there? Marriage is introduced with a presentation of a woman to a man and the woman is introduced to the man because of God's assessment of the problem. Here was God's assessment. There is a problem. Everything that God has done up until now He cannot keep saying, "It is good." In the first verse from this study, Genesis 2:18 it says, *Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."* God has made man in His image. God took the dust of the ground and brought the dust to glory. He made man in His image and told the man that He had three things for Him to do. He says, "One I want you to subdue the earth, give order to it. Secondly I want you to rule over the creation and thirdly I want you to be fruitful and multiply. Do not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. I have a tree of life for you that I will give to you. That is what I have called you to do."

One sees in the Genesis 2 that man sets about the task that God has called him to do. However man cannot fully image God as male. Man cannot subdue the earth alone as male. Man cannot rule over the creation alone as male. Obviously man cannot be fruitful and multiply alone as male. Dust is the cradle from where we came from. It is also our crypt because it is where we will

end up, thus dust to dust. For all who know Jesus Christ as Savior who dies before He comes back and returns to dust, from that dust He will raise you not to life but to eternal life, a transformed body for the new heavens and the new earth. Yet in creation as He creates man from dust His verdict is that there is a problem because it is not good for the man to be alone.

As a pastor I have this great desire in my heart and life that the congregation that I serve would learn the joy of the word “amen.” When someone prays Biblically in and through Christ, one of the greatest things one can do when that person finishes their prayer is to finish it with them by saying “amen” also. I enjoy doing that when I hear others pray. Also when God’s truth is preached and one hears it as it applies to their life and it real one of the things to say is “amen.” Men when someone says, “it is not good for the man to be alone” that is opportunity to say “amen.”

So God reaches not from the dust, but from the man’s side and takes a rib. From that rib He makes the woman. Genesis 2:22 says, “*And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and **brought her to the man.***” Another word here is “presented” her to him. Then the man in covenant leadership pronounces the name of the woman affirming his responsibility and authority. Here he has named all these animals but none of them could he rule with, subdue the earth with or be fruitful and multiply with. There was no helper suitable for him until God from his side brings this woman that He has fashioned. “Ish” (Hebrew word for man) looks at “Ishah” (Hebrew word for woman) and says “This is my reflection. *‘This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman (Ishah), because she was taken out of Man.’*” (Genesis 2:23).

Then God performs the first marriage covenant. The consummating words are found in Genesis 2:24, “*Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.*” Consequently they are now no longer two but one. God answers the problem with a promise. One of the greatest things I love to do as a pastor is perform marriages. I love to stand at the front and watch the door close after all the bridesmaids have come in and the groom starts looking back at the door waiting for his bride to come in. Then the door opens and she steps in. I am so passionate about this because when God wants to show us the glory and intimacy of His relationship with us He uses marriage to do it. Christ, the Groom and we are the bride. When I look I cannot help but think eschatologically and I look to that day when Jesus shall stand, the door will open and His bride and all of her beauty will come into His presence. That is one more reason I am going to fight for marriage because it is the glorious Biblically ordained picture of God’s relationship with His people. I love it when the groom looks back at his bride. Some will start trembling, some will already start saying, “I do, I do, I do...” At this point, as the pastor performing this ceremony I am on the verge of a miracle because one plus one equals one.

That is the fourth transforming truth and promise here. The covenant of marriage is one plus one equals one. The last verse in this study, Genesis 2:25 says, “*And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.*” This

statement is descriptive and prescriptive. It is not a throw away line. It is descriptive because sexuality within marriage is honorable, pure, to be embraced and pursued. It is God's gift of celebration and intimacy. Before sin there was no shame or guilt but now that there is sin there is now the call to maintain it in marriage. Therefore outside of marriage are purity, chastity and modesty. That statement on the other side of sin now calls one to modesty in one's dress and appearance. So here is this blessing of guiltless intimacy, blessed intimacy as is stated Hebrews 13:4; *"Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous."*

So how does this happen? God then gives the plan. There are five things in this marriage and the plan. In the God-ordained, institution of marriage in creation how is marriage to be embraced. The first thing one finds in the text is that marriage is heterosexual. Marriage is between a man and a woman. It is not between two men or two women. It is between a man and a woman who are corresponding helpmates. The second thing about the marriage plan is that it is monogamous. It is between one man and one woman. The third thing is that it is covenantal. It is an agreed relationship. It is a covenant of promises, commitments and relationship that have been established. It is a covenant relationship thus the Bible will say, "Husbands be faithful to the wife of your covenant" (Malachi 2:14, 15). A husband has entered into a covenant before the Lord with his wife. Fourthly this marriage is ministerial. It is there for each others mutual benefit as they give themselves to each other to serve the Lord's purposes. The fifth thing is that marriage is intimate even to the point of sacred sexuality. Thus sexuality outside of marriage, premarital or extramarital, will always have consequences. Thus do not commit adultery. Pursue purity. Here are these five statements that are built right into this statement.

So how does one get there? Here is the blueprint. One has to leave and one has to cleave and then one has to focus upon the Lord. Who performs this ceremony? God does. Who presents the woman to the man? God does. Who made the man and from the man made the woman? God did. It is God that is at the center of this relationship. Since one plus one equals one in this relationship then when one does not leave then one has one plus one equals six and that does not work. If one does not cleave then one has one plus one equals two. Then how does a person become one? A person becomes one in the Lord. It is not the woman that comes to be with the man or the man comes to be with the woman. It is that the man leaves his father and mother, the woman is given and they meet in the Lord. There is their unity. That brings marriages that thrive instead of marriages that attempt to survive.

I love the traditional marriage ceremony. A couple one time said to me, "Pastor we want to do it differently." Immediately I am not into the different piece but I said, "Well what do you want to do?" The lady said, "His dad and his mom are going to give him away." I said, "No, I don't think we're going to do that. Not with me up front." This marriage plan has been put together for a reason. It is imaging this text of Scripture in Genesis.

It is appropriate to take a minute with the symbolism here. Here is the man who is about to make promises, "I'm leaving my father and mother to take responsibility for this woman and I'm a hundred percent committed." Then he goes and finds the best man he can to vouch for his integrity. The dad of the bride stands right next to her and will not move until he hears the groom make those promises that he leaves everything in this world for this woman. Then he gives his daughter and the daughter has a woman beside her who can vouch for her honor and her commitment to purity in the Lord with her husband. They then join together and a marriage bed is declared in that covenant. I then end the ceremony this way, "Upon this consummation of this union before God I pronounce you 'man and wife' therefore those whom God has joined together let no man put asunder." That is the symbolism. Now how does it come into reality? How do people get there in marriage? First of all do not expect the world to get there first. Christians have got to lead the way.

Here are three basic takeaways to conclude this study. The first takeaway deals with all that people face in the culture today, the deconstruction of marriage, the destruction of marriage and the reconstruction of it, with all of these weapons of narcissism, idolatry of self, the attempt to redefine marriage in terms of partners. How do people get there, make marriage work? At this point, I encourage and believe in those who are involved politically to preserve the sanctity of marriage, stay at it. Once a society leaves the one man for one woman, as the Bible teaches, that society will soon be gone because it destroys it, reconstructs it, deconstructs it, and redefines it. What that does at best is restrains the death spiral of a society. It does not transform a society. A politician standing for the right things, legislation that upholds the right things, at best it restrains the death spiral of the culture in rebellion against God. So how is it transformed? Jesus turned to His people and says, "You know the Way; one man, one woman, one Life." Therefore to change the culture, as the church of Jesus Christ, Christians must be committed to fight Biblically for marriage and our marriages.

This leads to a second takeaway. Wherever Satan draws the line in the sand we have to be ready to meet it. I encourage you to continue to support those who meet it in the cultural arena and the public square of debate. There is another place to meet it. The first place is ministry. One must reach into this culture where its philosophy is destroying lives by destroying marriages, not in self-righteousness but in grace, mercy and love. We must reach these people who have been broken, who have experienced these hurts, who have been abandoned and they may have been so culturally impacted that they have made the wrong decisions about marriage. The church must show these people that there is a safe haven for these people to learn, grow in grace, be redeemed, be forgiven and be transformed. Here is a safe haven for sinners and for those who have experienced the brokenness of sin but the world is a death trap for sin because God's grace is greater than all of our sin, not only to forgive us, not only to restore us, not only to heal us, but to renew us and set us upon a new path of obedience to Him.

Such a church will take serious the preparation of people for marriage. Such a church will take serious what it means to prepare its children for marriage. Such a church will take serious what it means to reach into that college community and single community that is looking at the disarray of marriage in the field of culture and say to them, "There is a better way. We will mentor you. We will model for you. We will teach you and love you. And in our families you can come and experience this blessing. You don't have to look on the outside and wonder what's on the inside. You also don't have to wonder if God can still do a marriage for His glory. We want to show you a better way. We want you to know the grace and power of the redeeming work of Jesus Christ. We want to teach you how to pray for that right husband or that right wife and how to prepare for them, not with skimpy clothing, not with soap opera ethics and not with the idolatry of sexuality in which computers are opened up and people look at things they shouldn't be looking at. That is the lie of Satan. Those are not real bodies. They are biologically enhanced and cosmetically made over and they are not real." Sexual promiscuity and sexual perversion always brings brokenness of mind, heart, body and soul.

But there is a better way of a sacred relationship in which the blessing of sexuality between one man and one woman for life that grows day by day is a gift from God because it is not worshiped but Jesus is worshiped. That person is not there for my benefit but I am there for God's glory to benefit Him. We do not have a partnership in our marriage. That is fifty-fifty. You win half the time and you lose half the time. We have a marriage that meets in Christ in which a husband is a hundred percent devoted to his wife and a wife is a hundred percent devoted to her husband and together they are going to lift each other up in Christ. When we are both a hundred percent committed then both win because both are brought to Christ with the help of the other person and we actually find out that it is more blessed to give than to "take" as the cultural language would say. It is more blessed to give in the marriage bed. It is more blessed to give at the dinner table. It is more blessed to give in the car. It is more blessed to give in vocation. It is more blessed to give and God's way really brings life in Christ and for Christ. That is the way we transform a culture through a church that reaches out, that teaches, that models, that is growing, that is on the journey of grace and makes marriage a sacred institution.

That will not happen until you fight for your marriage which is the third takeaway. Fight for your marriage right now. If you are single start praying, "God, who is the woman or who is the man that You're going to present to me?" Ladies go home and look under your bed. You will see some dust. Let it remind you that God can bring some amazing things from dust/dirt. Then say, "Lord, start scraping up the dust and make a husband that will honor You in my life, and will teach me to honor You." Men, prime rib is the best piece of meat. Men say, "God who is it that You are going to fashion to bring to me and God, just like Eve present her to me that I will one day present her to You, not abused, not used but in beauty without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. God I know I'm going to fail but give me the grace to grow and learn."

Parents pray, "Father we are going to fight for our children. We are not going to let them get in a room with a computer and a closed door. We are not going to let them have free access to the communication medium of this world. We're actually going to parent our children. In fact, I am no longer going to see my children for personal fulfillment. I had children to raise them, to fill the earth for the glory of God. Children are not there for my personal asset, personality, esteem or enhancement. I may have to give up friendships for awhile. I may have to give up them liking me for a while but You didn't give them to me for me to be their friend. You gave them to me for me to be their father and their mother and I'm going to be a Godly father and mother by Your grace. When I fail I will ask for forgiveness. Where we succeed I will give You the glory but I want to raise this child to leave me not cleave to me. I want to raise this child to know You and leave me. That is what I'm committed to doing and I ask You for the grace and mercy to do it. There are others around me that are single and in college and in broken homes. I'm not going to be so taken up with my own home that I'm going to forget them. I want to reach to them as well."

To the culture, we will do those ministries that restrain sin. I am not belittling those. I praise God for every man and woman that is involved in those organizations socially and politically doing those things that restrain the death spiral. It is necessary to speak for Christ in the culture. But if we want to transform the culture then we have to have a church that embraces marriage in its sacredness, does what it is called to do to promote it, preserve it and to disciple God's people in it. That means it is not a program that you wait for. You start fighting for your own marriage with the weapons of the Spirit; prayer, fellowship, the Word of God, preaching. Men, fight for your wives. Do not let this world reach out for her. You are going to reach out for her. You are going to shower her with the love, grace and servant leadership that Christ has given you the ability to do. Ladies fight for your husbands. You are taken from his head and you are not here to conquer him. You are not taken from his feet and you are not here to be trampled upon. You are taken from his side to come along side of him. Adam led Eve into the marriage. Eve came right along his side to respect him and to honor him. God, we want to follow that blueprint. God, we want You to give us a model that will encourage our children and those that are around them.

Men, do not let your eyes go anywhere but that your heart would be filled with the love and devotion. Let there be no room in your heart for any other woman but your wife. Ladies, do not listen to the call of the world that attempts to turn God's world upside down to elevate you. You believe God. Even if your husband is disobedient to the Word remember 1 Peter 3:1, 2, "*Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won **without a word** by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct.*" That is how powerful God's life in you is.

I want to close with this one illustration because it so impacted me. Dr. Robertson McQuilkin was the president of Columbia Bible College and Seminary. Dr. McQuilkin has touched so many lives. He noticed his wife's feet when he got home one night were bruised and bleeding. He took her to the doctor and the

doctor said, "Let me do some investigation." So the doctor began to work with her. They soon found out that she had Alzheimer's. The doctor came to Dr. McQuilkin and said, "Let me tell you what is happening. Her life is coming apart at the seams. She can't make sense of anything anymore. This woman who had everything so together, so ordered, so gentle, so beautiful, so influential is now coming apart. You are her only point of reference that she holds to. Therefore when you leave to go to your office at the seminary she'll go out the back door and follow you on foot. She has been standing outside your office window just to look at you. You are the only point of reference she has got humanly speaking. That's why her feet are bruised and bleeding. She would stand there all day." Dr. McQuilkin said, "Sir, Thank you." He walked into his office. He wrote out his letter of resignation and turned it into the board of trustees. The board well meaning said to him, "Dr. McQuilkin we appreciate your devotion to your wife but we'll give you whatever money is required to get her in the right institution and get the right caregivers but you have so many people to touch as President of this seminary." He looked at them and said, "Gentleman, I appreciate what you are trying to tell me but my wife already has an institution and it's marriage. She already has a caregiver and it's me. I would not have touched anybody's life without her devotion. For all of my life I have had the better from her. Now it is my opportunity to bring the better to her and the worse that has come upon her." "For better or for worse..." He did what I think is one of the most profound things in the world. He stepped aside from a public ministry, an acclaimed ministry to give his life to his wife in those closing years.

That is what I mean when I say, "fight for a marriage." A person will not do that at the end if they are not doing it throughout. God, thank You for marriage. Thank You for my husband, my wife, You presented them to me. I now want to be Your instrument to present them to You and God through me, help this congregation at Briarwood and then with this congregation turn this world upside down that it might be right side up.

Prayer:

Father, thank you for the moments together in Your Word. Dear friend may I give an invitation to you this day. If you have never taken that first step to be transformed with a personal relationship with Jesus Christ then the marriage cannot be transformed and you cannot have a marriage that transforms a culture. But come to Christ because He will take you where you are, forgive you, redeem you, and give you a life that is unbelievable and He will transform you from the inside out. Please call us here at Briarwood if you want to have that personal relationship with Jesus Christ. We will pray with you. Dear friend use the weapons for the Holy Spirit and the gospel of grace to fight for your marriage. Then turn that marriage loose for the glory of God and watch God shake this world. O God our God hear this, our prayer, in Jesus name, Amen.