

XX. God's Blueprint in Biblical Perspective  
*Foundations From Genesis*

“A Theology of Marriage Part 1 – Creation”

Genesis 2

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This will be on marriage and the theology of marriage from the book of Genesis. Perhaps you like me go the Word and find certain things that become little hints that help you out. In a book of the Prophets you will find this wonderful moment where the Prophet says to the men of Israel that they are to care for and love the wife of their youth and covenant. One of the things that tells us is that marriage is a covenant relationship. Was it developed over a period of time as some kind of evolving social arrangement? The Bible is abundantly clear that is not true and we can see that illustrated and affirmed in the very work of anthropology and sociology.

It's interesting to note that every primitive tribe that has ever been discovered show that certain things become evident. We have never discovered one that isn't operating with a time structure of a week. I wonder how that happens? There have never been tribes that have been discovered that don't have holy days and a holy day of the week. We have never discovered such tribes, amazingly, that do not have the structure of family at the core of their existence and marriage. When they are discovered, they do not match the Biblical paradigms and Biblical profiles, why?

Here are two things to realize. Number one you find them because they are not something that evolves in a culture; they are something that God instilled and mandated as a sanctity in creation. This is why we are doing this series on God's blueprints for life with the foundations being established from the book of Genesis. Two, they are never close to what the Bible says about a holy day, marriage, and family. They will be perverted and distorted because the Bible tells us something happened after creation. The marks of their creation origin are affirmed by their continuation. The distortion affirms other things that the Bible records, which is the fall into sin. Because of sin what a week is to be and do is distorted and so is a holy day, marriage and family – distorted because of sin. You will see all kinds of distortions through religion and that is another thing you find in these tribes – they all have religion. It too is distorted.

Why do I bring this up? It is because we now live in a culture that is descending into insanity, absurdity, lethality and immorality. We see it distorting marriage, family and what it means to work six days and rest on the seventh. We see its distortion of sexuality. We see all these distortions because we are watching the descent back into neopaganism for it has the same effect and that is why we see all kinds of sexual promiscuity, sexual perversion, the perversion of marriage, family etc. So, what do we do?

There are two things we do. Number one, we do evangelism by fulfilling the Great Commission – to win people to Christ because lives can't get right until hearts and lives get right with God and God gets right within them. Secondly, we get engaged with another Great Commission enterprise and that's discipleship so that lives become ordered to the glory of God by God's Word because of the grace of God. It's not lives get ordered for grace but it's God's grace brings His Word by the power of His Spirit, therefore now for God's glory lives begin to get ordered. We know what the week is for, what the days that are holy are for before the Lord, we know what a marriage and family is and within the boundaries of God's covenant people, His

church, we begin to see order and ardor. Ardor is out of love for the Lord, one another and the order of God's Word thus Christ's church becomes a countercultural statement in a culture of chaos.

God's ordering of our lives according to the creation mandates enlivened by a Gospel power, purpose and direction, now begins to be established. This is why it is so important for churches to stay on mission, on message and in ministry. This is a little difficult for us because we are descending back to a neopagan world and life view. The reason I say this is because all of us come from ethnic ethnicities that once were dominated by paganism. Then the Great Commission was embraced by Christ's church and the Gospel goes from Jerusalem, to Judea, to Samaria and the utter most parts of the world. As it goes those barbarian pagan lives were brought to Christ, disciplined and then they began to understand what marriage and family is, what a state and government are for, how you parent and then the ordering comes as it permeates the culture.

I grew up in a time when things were being leavened, lighted and salted by Biblical truth to some direction and to some degree. Those things we're trying to preach and teach about on the foundations of life to some degree were applauded in life, but the distortions of idolatry and neopaganism have taken over to the point that we are descending into its death spiral of insanity, absurdity, lethality and immorality rooted in profitability. The word used to describe this these days is deconstruction, which means the unraveling of the creation mandates. Thus, I am doing this series. This is my feeble effort to initiate what I hope and pray will be carried out in small groups to teach and discuss among the people of God that will permeate into our culture.

We have already looked at the sanctity of Divine revelation, the sanctity of God as He reveals Himself in His Word, the sanctity of creation, the sanctity of sexuality, the sanctity of gender and then we began to work it out into the spheres of life. We are looking at what it looks like when a man of God and a woman of God now begin to live for God – whether it's in singleness (temporary or extended) or marriage (as husband and wife) or parenting (as a father and mother). We have looked at singleness and in this study we'll start looking at marriage according to Genesis.

Genesis 1 and 2 covers creation. In Genesis 3 we see the fall and then starting in Genesis 4 through Revelation 22 we see redemption. We saw in Genesis 1 and 2 that Adam and Eve were in a state of temporary singleness and now we see the effects and consequences of sin where there is now extended singleness. Both temporary and extended singleness are present in our world. How does the Gospel redeem these? What does it look like for a man of God not to be afraid of commitment in singleness? What does it look like for a man of God to reach out and give spiritual leadership in a collection of men and women in society? What does it look like for a man of God in singleness to spend time with a man's daughter and the father not have to be afraid of what might happen? What does it look like for a woman of God who finds her contentment in Christ and doesn't fall prey to idolatry, even though she is not denying how God created and made her?

All of these questions we have answered in the previous studies on God's blueprint but now we go to this matter of marriage – the foundation of God's creation, the institution of marriage. In redemption the foundation is Christ's church. In creation the foundational institution is marriage because marriage is the foundation of families. It is the context in which temporary and extended singleness is cared for, ministered to and upheld. It is also worked into the context of how God has done His work of redemption. When God establishes His redeemed covenant family – the bride of Christ, the sons and daughters of the living God – He even

reaches back into creation and draws the family into the way He collects the family for the new heavens and the new earth, using evangelism and discipleship through the family.

We see the promise of God in the Old Testament to Abraham as well as in the New Testament, the New Covenant in Acts 2:39 which says [39] *For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to Himself.* Acts 16:31 says [31] *And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."* Here we see how He has even drawn the family into the context of His work of redemption. When He does His work of redemption, we see what the last Prophet of the Old Testament says of the coming Messiah in Malachi 4:5-6 which says [5] *"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. [6] And He will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction."* He will bring forth men who love the wife of their youth and covenant.

Apart from penetrating the Gospel to the hi ways and byways as you share Christ and disciple others, I can't think of a greater opportunity as I watch the disintegration and devolution of our culture that within Christ's church would be built through the power of the Gospel, strong men and women of God, godly marriages and families (not perfect). For the world to see this in Christ's church it's a glorious statement to the world but there are two things we must avoid. We cannot ignore this foundation of institution of marriage and that which is built upon it – family. Nor can we make an idol of it because it's not marriage that is going to save men and women – that is a gift, design/sanctity, and creation mandate that is holy, set apart by God, but it has no saving power. Only the Savior saves. Marriage must not be worshipped, idolized or ignored. We must embrace it in the teaching of the whole counsel of God, wrap it up with Gospel meaning, direction and power and then use it for God's glory and not put it in the place of God's glory.

In this study I'm going to give you the importance of the theology of marriage and we'll look at the theology of marriage in creation. In the next study we'll look at what sin did to marriage so we'll be looking at marriage through the eyes of the fall. After that we'll look at the theology marriage through redemption – how the Gospel effects marriage and what the implications are that it has on it, in which I'll also share best practices in marriage for I have seen the benefits of them as I have put them into practice but I am no master at it by any means. We will also see how this blesses singleness and blesses evangelism and discipleship.

Now, I want to look at a couple of texts on the theology of marriage by way of creation. Marriage is a man and a woman, the Divine decree of creation. Genesis 1:26-31 says [26] *Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."*

[27] *So God created man in His own image,  
in the image of God He created him;  
male and female He created them.*

[28] *And God blessed them.* (The sanctity of male and female) *And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."* [29] *And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. [30] And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that*

*has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. [31] And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.*

Men and women bear the image of God and male and female functionally give the fullness of God’s image in a very special way. Now we take the creation of that sixth day and it gets magnified to tell us how this male and female in the context of this day are created. Let’s continue into Genesis 2.

Genesis 2:5-9 says [5] *When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, [6] and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground— [7] then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. [8] And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. [9] And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*

Now let’s look at Genesis 2:15-23 says [15] *The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. [16] And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, [17] but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”*

[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.”*

The man is formed from the dust of the ground with a three-fold mandate – subdue the earth, fill the earth and have dominion over the creatures and the earth. Amazingly he is made in the image of God spiritual as God breathes into his corpse but physically he is made from the dust of the ground. God’s creation comes from what his mandate and vocation is to engage, fill, subdue and rule over the earth and there was not a suitable helper for him to accomplish this and he can’t do the creation mandate alone – so that is why it is not good for the man to be alone. Do I believe that is relational? Yes, but I don’t think it’s primarily speaking relationally because Adam had unhindered access to God so he is not in a liability. So, it is not good for him to be alone in the task that God has given him.

So, now He creates the woman and that is why she is called Isha, the reflection of man and man is Ish. She is Isha because she was taken out of Ish, man. She is the completer of man and comes alongside of him. As one writer said, she is not from his head, she is not over him. She is not from his feet, she is not under him. She is from his side and comes alongside of him.

Matthew Henry said she comes from the rib, the place closest to his heart that he might cherish her. Thus together, the vocation can be engaged. Together they will rule over and subdue the creation for they are God's vice regents. Together they will be fruitful and multiple. After the suitable helper is created, God then ordains the relationship. Their relationship is a covenant relationship where the two become one.

Genesis 2:24-25 says [24] *Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast (cleave) to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.* [25] *And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.*

When you modify the word cleave it can actually mean the opposite of itself. A butcher's knife is known as a cleaver. A cleaver separates it. The old zippers used to be called cleavers and they pull it together. I like the rhyming of the old language of leaving and cleaving but the translation gives us another interpretation of the husband holding fast to his wife to become one flesh. Here is the gift of the sacred sexuality. They were not ashamed because no sin had entered in.

I want to give you a couple of thoughts and then we'll close in prayer. According to the creation marriage is a miracle for one plus one equals one and no one can get away with that on a math test. That is miraculous and is built into the creation. There are two steps called for in order for one plus one to equal one. The first step is you have to leave your father and mother and two you have to cleave to one another. In a marriage ceremony the man takes statements of intention and the woman makes statements of intention. The man has left his father for his father is not in the ceremony and the woman is going to be given to the man because he has left to cleave only unto her. You can't cleave until you leave and if you don't cleave your leaving becomes empty so it's leaving and cleaving. If you don't leave you have one plus one equals six and believe me that won't work.

If you don't cleave then you have one plus one equals two and that's why I avoid talking about marriage as a partnership because I don't think that is what the text is teaching – a 50/50 relationship. I believe it is teaching that as the man leaves and cleaves and the woman is given to him, he is 100 percent committed to her – no human priorities preceded, not even his father and mother. He will still honor them but he has left them to cleave to her and she is 100 percent committed to him.

I'm not being a marriage scrooge on this but I want to get a point across here. I so often hear 'I'm not losing a son, but gaining a daughter' or 'I'm not losing a daughter, I'm gaining a son.' Wrong! You just lost your daughter, you just lost your son. You are going to get them back but you get them back with the one in whom they are united. This isn't two families coming together. These are two leaving to make a family that will now go back to their previously immediately to become their extended family, but their relationship to them is not primarily son and daughter for it is with each other – husband and wife. They are united in the holy and sacred bonds of Christian marriage, whether it's membership in a church or engagement in a ministry or the raising of children or their relationships with dads, moms, uncles, aunts, etc., it's now on until death due us part as one together.

As I anticipate our study when we get to parenting, the objective in parenting in the Lord is the oneness of the husband and wife and raising your children to leave you. That is what they have been equipped to do so they're united. This isn't easy and there are reasons we have father of the bride jokes and mother-in-law jokes. When I'm counseling couples I let them know this leaving is not just geographical dislocation. Most women think they are marrying the romantic version of their dad and the man thinks he is marrying the romantic version of his mother and

that's wrong too. Imagine the groom's father and the bride's mother getting married, for that's what you are starting with. Guys, you have learned from your dad how to treat women and how to treat a wife for it has impacted you – you're not a blank slate. Women have learned how to treat men and how to treat a husband from their mother. It's not a blank slate. Some of it is great and many times it's glorious. Sometimes it will have to be edited as you fix your eyes on the Groom (Jesus) and the bride (His church).

I will tell you who is hurting the most at a wedding – it's the father of the bride and the mother of the groom and that's why we have the father of the bride and mother in law jokes. The father of the groom is thinking 'this is party time, praise the Lord that he got this woman in a weak moment, finally, off my income tax, out of my house, go to it son!' The mother of the bride is thinking 'this wonderful!' But it's tough on the father of the bride for you have been the number one man and you now go to number two and as soon as some snotty nose kid is born you just went to number three. I will tell you from experience that it will be glorious. The mother of the groom is no longer the number one woman for she is now number two. Eventually the daughter will take care of her mom and the son will take care of his father just as they took care of them.

There is a loss of status and I not only have to acknowledge that where you are no longer number one in your daughter's life or number one in your son's life, but you also have to help it. You have to encourage it for you get the privilege to accelerate it because you know that is what is best. One plus one equals one for life – that's the creation pattern of the covenant relationship of marriage. I will talk more about how you sign and seal that covenant in the next study, but it's the marriage bed. That is why at the end of the weddings I do I say 'Upon the consummation of this union I now pronounce you husband and wife.' The ring is something we have invented and it's nice to do in public, but the real sign and seal after the covenant has been set up is that the marriage bed be holy.

The two have become one in covenant – signed and sealed by God's glorious provision and that is why Paul says in Ephesians 5:31-33, [31] *"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."* [32] *This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.* [33] *However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.* He did not say marriage was a sacrament – the sacrament of marriage, in marriage, the covenant of the marriage, what unites is the blessing of the marriage bed which is holy and undefiled. Praise His name forever. What happened to that picture? It is called sin and this is where we will pick up in the next study. Let's pray.

Prayer:

God, thank You the time we could open up Your Word and to think our way through it as we build on it. Please guide and direct us through Your Word. Thank You Father for the opportunity in the face of a world that is embracing chaos and confusion that we can present the testimony of the Gospel with order and ardor, with love and truth, beginning in marriages, overflowing to families and manifested in Your church, in Jesus' Name, Amen.