

Genesis Ch2v18-25 - One Flesh

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Date: 10 October 2021

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[0 : 0 0] helps you. We're going to read Genesis chapter 2 verses 18 through to 25. The Lord God said, it is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.

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. 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. 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, then closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. 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. That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh. Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

So let's pray. Father, thank you that we are not left to figure out your design and your plan for life. And so we pray that as we read your word, these foundations, these beginnings of what it is to be a man, what it is to be a woman, that you would instruct us and help us to see our purpose as a man and as a woman today in this world, in our home, in our workplace. Teach us and instruct us. And we pray, Father, that what we learn today would enable us to live for your glory, so that your glory is spread, not just through Karagoline, but throughout this earth. Teach us, Father, we pray. Amen. Well, it's a wonderful picture, isn't it, Genesis chapter 2. God and man dwelling together in the garden, enjoying the beauty of God's creation and delighting in their fellowship with one another. But there's no lounging by the pool here, because there's great work to be done. The borders are to be expanded, because it's God's desire that the whole earth be his dwelling place. Look back with me to chapter 2, verse 15. We saw this last week. The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden in Eden to work it and to take care of it. We saw there that the garden was like a temple, a dwelling place for God, a dwelling place that was to grow as man worked and cared for it. It was to expand from the garden out into Eden and from Eden to the ends of the earth, because the whole earth is to be a dwelling place for God. A place where God's place where God's place where God extends his rule and where man enjoys his relationship with God. There's work to be done in this garden to expand the borders.

[4 : 1 9] And our question this morning is, how will this work get done? How is it going to expand beyond the borders of the garden to Eden to the ends of the earth? Well, three things we're going to look at from this text. A suitable helper, a covenant marriage, and a greater relationship.

So first, a suitable helper. Up to this point in the creation account, everything has been good. All the way through Genesis chapter 1, God declares, and it was good. But there's something that is not good.

Verse 18, the Lord God said, it is not good for the man to be alone. Now when you read that, I wonder what your thought is. Our immediate thoughts are perhaps, poor Adam.

He's all on his own, isn't he? In this great big garden. He's got no friends. Maybe he would have been better called Norman. Norman no mates, nobody to talk to. He's lonely. Well, I don't think that's Adam's main concern. After all, the creator God of the universe is present with him.

Let's look again at verse 18. The Lord God said, it is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him. God doesn't provide a friend, first and foremost.

[6 : 0 0] God provides a helper. Adam isn't bored. He's working and caring for the garden. And he needs help in expanding the garden. If the whole earth is to be a dwelling place for God, he's never going to do it on his own.

He needs help. And he needs a special kind of help. Look at verse 19. Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of the sky. Is he going to find help from the animals? Well, look at the end of verse 20. But for Adam, no suitable helper was found. Adam needs someone and something different to the animals, but like himself. There's work to be done. The borders need expanding. So God in his goodness provides a suitable helper.

So what does this helper look like? What kind of help? Well, let's read verse 21 to 22. 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. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib that he had taken out of the man and he brought her to the man.

[7 : 36] There's four things I want us to notice about this man-woman relationship. The worker and the helper. First, woman was made for man.

Did you notice in verse 21 and 22, the woman is formed from the man out of his rib? And she is given to the man.

We say, Johnny, come on. This is 2021. You can't say things like that. Woman made for man? I mean, woman is independent from man. Woman has been liberated from man.

You get yourself into trouble saying things like that. Well, let me be clear. Let's see what the text is saying. Woman is given to man not for his own wants and wishes, but to serve God's purposes.

Woman is to be a helper. Not a servant or a mistress or a slave. In fact, woman and man are equal in value.

[8 : 52] Being a helper doesn't diminish worth or value or dignity. Look back at chapter 1, verse 27. Where God created mankind in his own image.

In the image of God he created them. Male and female he created them. You see, man and woman are both image bearers.

Man can't reflect God's image on his own, and woman can't reflect God's image on her own.

Together they reflect the image of God. That's what gives us value and worth.

Women don't need to prove their value in physical beauty, or men don't have to prove their worth by having a successful career. Men and women are valued because we are image bearers.

This is what gives us value and worth. So, made for man, equal in value. But third, we are different in our roles.

[10 : 01] Woman isn't the same as man. We're different. We're different in lots of different ways. Different physically. So, in case you didn't know, men produce 5,000 to 6,500 units of testosterone.

While women produce 300 to 400 units of testosterone. That's why, typically speaking, men are stronger, bigger, and faster.

We're different biologically. So, women and men have different sexual organs. One made to give, the other to receive.

Our hormones, well, they affect us differently. And we're different socially as well, aren't we? Men love to talk about things and are competitive.

Talk about sport, talk about machines, talk about work. They're competitive. Whereas women, well, they have the ability, don't they, to talk to each other.

[11 : 11] And they're more agreeable rather than competitive. We're not the same. This is already being reflected in creation. Think back through to Genesis 1 and 2.

God has created things already in opposite pairs. Light and darkness. Land and sea. Heavens and earth.

So it is with the creation of man and woman. We're different. Therefore, we have different roles.

This theme is picked up for us in Corinthians.

You can just have a jump forward to there. 1 Corinthians chapter 11. 1 Corinthians 11 verses 8 and 9.

For man did not come from woman, but woman from man.

[12 : 24] Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. Verse 11. Nevertheless, in the Lord, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman.

For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God. Let's go back to Genesis.

You see, there is a difference. But with that difference comes an interdependence. We have different roles and responsibilities.

That doesn't mean to say that women can only cook and men can only work in the office. The point is, we are different. And we're to celebrate our difference.

We do things in a different way. Which brings us to the fourth idea. That men and women are complementary by design.

[13:30] God has made us to complement each other. One thinker and theologian, Andrew Wilson, explains it very simply like this.

He says it's a relationship in which two people improve or emphasize each other's qualities. Very simple, but very helpful.

A relationship in which two people improve or emphasize each other's qualities. Now that doesn't just apply to a marriage relationship. This applies to all men and women in all of their relationships. Whether that's at work or in their social environment. It's not competition, but cooperation. It's not independence, but interdependence.

Men need women and women need men in every area of life. Now we know this is a red hot issue today in our society. Look at social media.

[14:30] Whether it's the gender balance in work or equal pay for sports players. Whatever the topic, whatever the issue. There ought to be no fight or battle between the sexes.

No one is superior and no one is inferior. And as Christians we have an awful lot to say about this. God's design for us is different.

And that difference is good. It's a difference that actually makes us a suitable fit. Together as men and women, whatever our marital status, we are workers and we are helpers.

Complimenting one another to serve God's greater and grander purposes. That together we would expand the borders.

We would live life as God intends. So that the whole earth becomes a dwelling place for him. Where his glory is declared. Where his reign is expanded.

[15:33] And we can enjoy a relationship with him. So, the work, how is it going to be done?

Well, God's provided a suitable helper. Second, a covenant marriage. Just a sec while I get a drink. So, a covenant marriage.

God's design for men and women is to complement each other. And for most of us, that's going to lead into a marriage relationship. What develops in the garden is a covenant marriage.

Look at verse 23. This is man at his best when it comes to poetry. This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.

[16:35] And she shall be called woman. For she was taken out of man. This isn't boring. This is a declaration of delight and wonder. Maybe if you're a woman sitting there, you're thinking, well, that's not how I'd like to be described.

But this was the best Adam could do. A declaration of delight and wonder. Yes, God has provided a suitable helper. But God has provided an intimate helper.

Christopher Ash, who's written a great book on marriage, captures it well with this. For this is delight with a shared purpose.

Intimacy with a common goal. Companionship in a task that stretches beyond the boundaries of the couple themselves. As we rejoice with the lovers in the garden, we must not forget that there is work to be done.

The borders need expanding. If the world is to be God's dwelling, where his rule extends and where people live for his glory, then there needs to be a companionship of working together.

[17:46] You see, the primary purpose of marriage is not to meet my sexual or social needs. The primary purpose of marriage is to serve the grand purpose of God.

Look back at 1, verse 28. Here's God's purpose for marriage. God blessed them, that's the man and the woman, and said to them, Be fruitful and increase in number.

Make babies. Grow the family. You see, the job is so great that it's going to take more than just one man and one woman. It's going to need a whole family.

That's the purpose of marriage. Mum and dad raising children in the ways of God so that their children will in turn grow up to serve the purposes of God.

Families, all families who are gathered here today, that's your purpose. You are a team of workers and helpers serving God so that others will come to serve God.

[19 : 04] and enjoy a relationship with him. Contrary to what many people say, children are not a burden or an inconvenience.

They are not a mistake that ruins your lovely figure or interferes with your career move. Children are, verse 28, chapter 1, verse 28, a blessing.

God blessed them. They are vital members of the husband and wife team. The teaching of scripture is this, don't delay in having children, but make children, if you're married, your priority.

Now, as we talked recently, some will not be able to have children and that's always sad and painful. It's very hard. But that doesn't mean to say you've lost your purpose.

No, a husband and wife will go on serving God's purposes in a very fulfilling way, but in a different way. Now, if God's plan and design for marriage is to meet God's purpose, we need to follow his design.

[20 : 18] Look at verse 24 and 25. That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife and they become one flesh.

Adam and his wife were both naked and they felt no shame. Three things just to look at from this to understand the design of marriage.

First, it's to be an exclusive union. Marriage is between one man and one woman. That's what it says there in verse 24.

Therefore, the man leaves his father, who is a male, and mother, who is a female, and unites to his wife. There's a leaving and there's a cleaving.

Now, this is really important for us to grasp. It's about leaving home and setting up your own home. Husbands and wives are to begin to make their own decisions and to make their own way in life.

[21 : 26] Running back to mummy and daddy all the time is only going to hinder and break the marriage. And husbands, you have a particular role in guarding and protecting the marriage.

Just as Adam, as we'll see next week in chapter 3, was held responsible, so husbands, you're responsible for your marriage, for your family.

That's what God has given you that role to do. You're responsible for it. Wives, you have a particular role in supporting and helping your husband in that role.

To help him and enable him to take responsibility. That's God's design. And if you are parents here today of married children, you also have a very important role to your married children. don't interfere. Don't interfere. Don't smother them. But support them to live out their roles that God has given them.

[22 : 34] So marriage is to be an exclusive union. And it's to be a lifelong covenant. You may remember in Matthew chapter 19 and I think it's Mark 10, when Jesus was asked about divorce.

If it was permitted, could a man leave his wife? That's the question the Pharisees are asking Jesus. And Jesus answered that question by quoting chapter 2, verse 24 of Genesis.

He says, that is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife and they become one flesh. And then Jesus added these words. What God has joined together, let no one separate.

In other words, marriage is intended to be a permanent, lifelong commitment. It's a covenant relationship. A relationship in which people are committed to fulfill the promises as long as you shall live.

Of course, marriage is hard. You'll know that if you're married. It's not easy. It does take work and effort. That's why we need to support and encourage those who are married.

[23 : 57] If you're here and you're thinking, well, I'm not married, this doesn't apply to me. It does. You are to support and encourage those who are married. And it's not wrong if we're married to need help or receive help.

Sometimes marriages need outside intervention and counsel. There's many times Kirsty and I, individually and together, have spoken to friends and say, you know what?

I'm finding it really difficult. It's okay to ask for help and to need help. We need to nurture and grow our marriages.

We need to invest in our marriage for the very purpose so that we can serve the purposes of God well. If I can use Kirsty and I again as an example, when we're at loggerheads with each other, if we're not getting on well, we don't serve the purposes of God well.

It doesn't function. It doesn't work. So if you're here today and you're struggling in your marriage, it's okay.

[25 : 09] People are there to help. Come and speak. Come and talk to me. We'll find you the support and the help that you need. Don't wait. Do it today.

So marriage is to be lifelong. But what about this issue of if my spouse is unfaithful? What if I find myself in an abusive relationship? Am I meant to just shut up and put up? I mean, that's what they did in the old days, isn't it?

Just shut up and put up? Absolutely not. Scripture is not silent on these matters. Scriptures have things to teach us.

Let me say three things in relation to that. First, if ever you find yourself in such a situation where there's unfaithfulness or abusiveness, reach out and ask for help.

[26 : 14] Don't wait. Go talk to someone. No one in any marriage should have to live with that. Yes, we have social services, but I think the church has a particular role in supporting people, caring for them and providing for them.

And I want to say that as a church, that is what we will do for you. We will provide the care and support that is necessary in such a situation.

The second thing, that if the marriage is in difficulty, the aim is always, this is where Scripture points to, it is always transformation and restoration.

With God's grace and with the right pastoral support, people can change. That's what God does. He transforms us. Even Christians who do awful and terrible things, people can change and people can forgive.

The aim is always to reconcile what is broken. Always. That's always the first aim. Third, if reconciliation can't be achieved, if someone walks out in the marriage and doesn't want to come back, if someone doesn't want to own up or be repentant for their sin, well then maybe divorce is necessary.

[27 : 41] But only in certain situations. You can talk to me a bit more about this. We don't have time to go into all the exegesis of it just to say that Matthew 19, verse 9, 1 Corinthians 7, verse 15, I think give us the foundation and the principles for decisions that we make around this.

Let me give four where it may be necessary. Unfaithfulness, Jesus spoke about that in Matthew 19. ongoing affairs, sexual immorality.

That could be a reason. Desertion or abandonment which comes up in 1 Corinthians, whether that's physical or economical, leaving the home or not providing in the way that should be done.

and I think from this comes principles for areas of abuse, whether that's sexual, emotional or physical.

Perhaps there's threat within the home. Maybe children are in danger. in all of these situations, it may be necessary, certainly separation, but it may be divorce is required.

[29 : 02] Of course, it's not always right to divorce and there may be decisions that we need to make about that and again, I would encourage that that should be done with the counsel of the right of the elders and the pastors to help work through those issues.

But we must take Jesus' word seriously. What God has joined together, let no one separate. So marriage is to be a lifelong commitment.

So it's an exclusive union. It's to be a lifelong covenant and within marriage, sexual intimacy.

Look at verse 24. We're told they became one flesh. Again, contrary to what many people say, sex is a good gift from God and it is good.

It is to be nurtured and enjoyed. Sex isn't just about having children. Within the marriage context, it deepens trust and strengthens the bonds.

[30 : 14] It's the mutual considerate act of giving and receiving. Verse 25, Adam and his wife were both naked and they felt no shame.

As one writer put it, this doesn't mean to say that Adam had a great six-pack and Eve was a wonderful supermodel. No, there was just openness.

There was purity in their giving and receiving. Mutual consideration. You see, marriage is good and for those who marry, it serves God's grand purposes.

Of course, not everybody is going to marry. Some will remain single. And for those who are married, well, the day may come where you may find yourself single again, as our spouse dies.

But being unmarried is not inferior. It doesn't mean second best. In fact, scripture tells us that we can see it as a gift.

[31 : 19] It means greater service, more freedom to serve the purposes of God. So, how will the work get done? God provides a suitable helper.

He has designed covenant marriage. And then third, a greater relationship. You see, God's design for man and woman to be worker and helper is good.

They complement each other. They're a suitable fit serving the purposes of God. And marriage is the same. It is God's good design. A covenant relationship between one man and one woman bound together through the sexual union.

Husband and wife expanding the family to serve the purposes of God. By living out our God-given shape and pattern, so the earth becomes a dwelling place for God.

His rule is extended and we enjoy a relationship with him. In fact, what we see here in Genesis 2 is the greater relationship that God intends for all people.

[32 : 33] that worker-helper husband-wife relationship is a sign of what God intends for all people with himself.

You see, when Paul wanted to explain what our relationship to God was like, he went all the way back to Genesis chapter 2, didn't he? Have a look with me at Ephesians chapter 5.

Ephesians chapter 5 verses 31 to 32. Ephesians 5 verses 31 to 32.

So, to describe and to help us understand what a relationship with God looks like, as we say, he goes right back to creation and he picks up those very words in Genesis 2 verse 24.

Look at verse 31. For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and the two will become one flesh. This is a profound mystery.

[33 : 53] What are we talking about here? He says, I am talking about Christ and the church. You know that account in Genesis, man and woman in the garden, the worker and the helper?

You know that account of Adam and Eve, husband and wife, marriage? It's actually all about Christ and his church.

It's all about people and their relationship with him. It's all about a covenant relationship we can have with God. Just think about that with me for a second.

Just think about what Christ has done for us. Think about his submission. Christ came, didn't he, in humble submission to his father.

There's no battle going on. My food, says Jesus, is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. The work that Christ had been given was to be finished with his work on the cross.

[34 : 58] And so even when he was faced with his impending death, what did he pray in the garden? Your will be done, not my will. Christ lived his life in perfect submission, doing the father's work, serving the father's purposes.

others. No fight for independence, cooperation through his submission.

But also think about his sacrifice. Because Christ's submission would lead to the ultimate sacrifice, him giving his life for us.

He submitted himself to death on the cross, to take the blame for all of our sin, for all the wrong ways you and I have treated women and the way we have treated men, not according to God's design.

We've all failed, whether we're single or whether we're married, we haven't treated our wives as we should, and wives we haven't treated our husbands as we should. And yet Christ sacrifices his life for us, so that we could be forgiven for all our mess and all our brokenness, so that we could have a right relationship with him and restore our relationships with each other.

[36 : 27] Now the story of Christ, his submission and his sacrifice is displayed through the marriage of man and woman. Just as we reflect man and woman, just as we reflect the image of God, so marriage is to reflect the work of Christ.

You want to know what the gospel looks like? Look at marriage. Look how Paul connects our different roles in marriage with the work of Christ.

Verse 24, Ephesians 5, verse 24. Now as the church submits to Christ, and I think there's a pattern here, the church submits to Christ just as Christ submitted himself to the Father.

As the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.

Do you see how beautiful that design is? It's the same design and pattern that we see in Christ and his relationship, in his submission, and his sacrifice.

[37 : 49] Our complementary roles are a suitable fit, not to serve our own wants and wishes, but to serve the purposes of God, to display the greatness and glory of Christ.

Marriage is not competition, but cooperation. It's not a fight for independence, but faithful interdependence. As we all, each of us, submit to God's shape and pattern for marriage, so the purposes of God are fulfilled.

His rule is extended and his relationship is enjoyed. When it comes to man and woman, when it comes to husband and wife, God is the creator and designer.

He knows what he's talking about and we will do best when we follow his design. Let's pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[38 : 59] Amen. Father, we can only stand back in awe and amazement at something that is taken for granted so often every single day, to look at a man, to look at a woman, to see their unique differences, equally image-bearers, but all part of your beautiful and good design.

We confess, Father, that we have not treated woman and man as we should and we have not lived in marriage as we should.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Father, would you forgive us for the things we have done wrong, said wrong, thought wrong.

And not only that, but would you give us the guts and the courage to change what needs to be changed, to transform us, to be a woman of God, to be a man of God, to be the husband and wife that you've called us to be.

We ask this because we know that in it all it displays your glory. It's a picture of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[40 : 45] So Father, would you fill us by your Spirit to do that and to do it well. In Jesus' name. Amen.

We're going to sing. This song really picks up on the theme of the submission and the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus who came as a servant to serve each one of us.

Amen. So let's say you'll keep in mind. That's for him. That's for you. This song really picks up on the theme of the Mistress di leads, to be balanced as a servant as a servant with the Lord Jesus Christ, the listener to you who comes in, and to be Timmie and that he is by next.