

Marriage and the Family

Introduction

Our marriages must rest on a solid foundation and not a faulty foundation. Marriage is not our invention to do with it as we please. Our Father alone holds the royal patent on marriage and the family. So we as human beings are not given the authority to redefine it or discard it in the event that it fails to suit us. Marriage is not the invention of a sociologist¹ or psychologist, nor is it the product of a male-dominated culture seeking to oppress² or oppose women, nor is it a force counteracting women's liberation. It is the creation of the Sovereign God. So again, marriage is not our invention to do with as we please. Marriage is the creation of God — it is something of great importance shared with every other created thing, and that is that it ultimately exists for God, our Creator and Father, and His glory.

So our marriage is not our own; it belongs to its Creator. To fail to see this is to diminish the significance of your marriage and is ultimately to its detriment and disadvantage.³ The dignity of your marriage and family is grounded in the fact that it is the sovereign creation by the very Word of God for His highest expression of good in creation — man (Gen 5:1-2).

Gen 1 and 2 is the unfolding account of creation. Gen 1:1-2 — The earth became a mess, since Satan had his hand in God's creation, Planet Earth. He has made a mess of all God's creation, especially marriage and the family, contrary to man's ultimate purpose.

Verse 4 — God saw (He stood back to look it over) that the light was good. Likewise the water and ground were good (verses 9-10). The vegetables after their kinds

¹ Who is actually *antisocial*, hostile to God's established order in the marriage.

² *Oppress* is to keep down by unjust use of force or its threats.

³ *Detriment*: damage, harm, loss; *Disadvantage*: deprived of its true advantage for man (Gen 2:18).

were good — He was satisfied with them. Verses 12,18,21,25 — Good, good, good, good.

Gen 2:18 — NOT GOOD. This is the first time God said it is *not* good. Not until God said, “Then...,” in Gen 1:26, would all things be “very good.” Marriage makes everything else *very good*. Gen 1:31 is the *seventh* use of the word *good* in the creation story: verses 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, and 25. But only after verse 27, the creation of *male and female* for their intended purpose (to multiply and fill the earth, with all the good things to be ruled over by them, verses 25,30), does God say (which is absolute for this age) of all that He had made that it was *very good*.

Verse 25 — All creation up to the animals was *good*. But not until verse 26, when He said “Then... Let us make man — male and female — in Our image,” did He add the adverb *very* (*me’od*, #3966) — to the highest degree possible for His creation.

God did not take woman from Adam’s head, lest she feel superior, nor from his feet, to be trampled on, but from his side — as a suitable companion, a helper. All that He had made prior to this (verses 4-25) was good, but verse 26 was *very good*. Verse 31 — “Very good” came because of verses 26-28.

Verse 26 — “Let us” (tri-unity) shows His *intention* to make man in His own image and likeness. Verse 27 — In His own image, male and female, He created them. Nothing else bears God’s image, not even angels in all their radiance and glory. This is the basis for human self-worth — that the Creator shares His image and likeness with Man — male and female. To restore glory to man in its fullness is Jn 17:22, which is the basis of self-esteem to the full (that is, the right understanding of self-esteem, contrary to the distorted understanding of self-esteem). Gen 2:18 says it is *not good* for man to be alone, that is, without woman.

The consummation of God’s creative work is His design of the human race to bear His image and likeness. The high point is verse 27 when He created Man, male and female, to bear His image, and together to have dominion over all creation. This is *very*

good (verse 31). But carrying out the predetermined plan and purpose of God, His ultimate intention in Gen 1:26, was put in abeyance until Rev 21:3, until mankind could subdue and rule over their own actions according to Gen 3:16-19.

In Gen 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, and 25, He said, “It is good”; but not until He cleared up the problem of Gen 2:18 could He say, “It is *very good*” (Gen 1:31). In Gen 2:18, God said, “It is *not good*.” God’s creation was neither complete nor fully satisfying to Him until Gen 2:18 could be made right, or “very good” (Gen 1:31). It is not good for the man to be alone. God’s creation and the man were not complete without the woman, the helper suitable for him. Adam is not mindful of the fact that he is incomplete, although he knew he was alone. In the zoological kingdom (paradise before his eyes), man did not see the problem (Gen 2:19-20) of his own alone-ness.

Adam saw no suitable helper — no animal shared his nature, providing the companionship of another creature on his level. So God (our Father) said, “Son, I want you to lie down and go to sleep.” Afterward God said, “What came out from you is the last creature for you, Adam, to name.⁴ I want to know what you think of ‘it’.” And Adam replied when he *saw* her, “This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called *woman*, for she was taken out of man.” These were the very first recorded words of a human being created in the image of God. She can make his heart soar — or sore.

This was the pre-fall account of woman and man. This new creation was not like the animals, but this *woman* was “bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.” Notice that Adam’s words capture both Eve’s equality and her distinctiveness. Two things that make marriage a wonderful thing (“very good”) are her equality and her distinctiveness. He welcomes her as “bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh” — in other words, “She is my equal, my counterpart, my partner. She is from my own flesh. We go together.” So,

⁴ The privilege of naming God’s creatures implies superiority, even over woman.

recognizing her equality, Adam also takes his prerogative to name her — she shall be called *woman*.

God did not tell Eve who she was in relation to Adam. He allowed Adam to define Eve, in keeping with God's intention that Adam would exercise *functional headship* over her. They had equality of worth, but distinction in function.

Gen 2:18 — It is not good *not* to have a suitable helper — a helper suitable, corresponding, one to be face-to-face with, having strong equality, being “spiritual” equals before God. Eve is just as much an image-bearer as Adam. Eve stands face-to-face with Adam, yet her distinction in function is made evident by the fact that she was created to be Adam's helper.

You see, equality of worth is not synonymous with sameness of function. Eve was created *from* Adam, which stresses her equality with him, but we are also told that she was created *for* Adam, stressing her defined function in relationship to him.

In the beginning, God did not make both Adam and Eve from the dust of the earth at the same time and for one another without distinction; neither did God make the woman first, and the man *from* the woman and *for* the woman. The man was not created to help the woman, but the reverse, and this was no accident.

1 Cor 11:8-10 — “For this reason...” So we see from this the proper orientation of relationship within a marriage — distinguishing proper from improper. We begin to see and understand God's intended order for the marriage relationship — man and woman in equal status before God, yet possessing distinct functions that are not interchangeable. Adam and Eve provide a *paradigm* for all other man-woman relationships — what God wants every other couple to be — a marriage — because they were created for this purpose. Homosexuality is excluded (Lev 18:22; 20:13). Bestiality is excluded also (Lev 18:23; 20:15). Monogamy is God's original intention, since He created just one woman for man. Adam and Eve are a paradigm for what every other couple ought to be, which includes equality of worth and distinction of function.

We must realize that the distinction between equals is the very model of the Godhead — three co-equal eternal Persons. They are distinguished by their distinction in function in the outworking of Redemption. His plan is accomplished through the authority and submission among the three co-equal, co-eternal Persons of the Godhead (1 Cor 11:3), in glory and majesty.

So we see that submission is not the consequence of the Fall, but difficulty with submission is the consequence of the fall, because she gave her ear to the evil one (1 Tim 2:13-14). Submission is the key to order and peace and prosperity. Submission (Eph 5:22) means to surrender oneself to the will or authority of another. Lk 14:32 — There is no salvation without submission.

Gen 3:16 is not the consequence of the fall, but a protectorate of the man, the protector. Even though Eve was sinless before her fall, she nevertheless did not give Adam, her head, her complete trust, when Satan tempted her. By her independent action she failed to give honor to her head. So can we say that sinless people have no difficulty with the respect and honor expressed by submission? But she was deceived — she believed a lie, reasoned away her sobriety (1 Tim 2:13-15).

In the creation of marriage, God made two out of one; but now in marriage He makes one out of two. God brought Eve to Adam. How can you be sure that God brought your wife to you? The answer is simple if you married her — He did. But what is marriage?

Gen 2:24 — For this reason, this purpose, they will become one flesh. *One-fleshness* is the intimate, comprehensive companionship, the permanent and complete giving over of oneself into a shared (*koinonia*) existence with one another. Jn 17:10 is the model for all things, as Solomon said, “I am my beloved’s and my beloved is mine.” They are one (Jn 17:21-23). This is the model of what every other marriage should be — what God has joined together.

Mt 19:4-6 — “Haven’t you read ...” Our Master goes back to the paradigm in Gen 2:18-24. The two who marry are no longer two but one. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no man put asunder, i. e., separate. What God has joined together... If then this intimate, personal, comprehensive⁵ companionship is complete, it is permanent; that is, if both have given themselves in holy matrimony, as a shared existence with one another, then it is from God.

So what God has joined together (what you submitted to do), let no man (except at the expense of the Second Death) separate! This stands whether we are talking about the very first marriage or your own marriage, which was a sovereign creation of the same God who created marriage between the first two (Gen 5:1-2). Unless we come to this conclusion, then it is better to stay “alone.” But if you marry, according to what marriage is, then it is God who brings your spouse to you.

God is the One who, after creating marriage, stepped back from it and pronounced it *very good*, and we take the vow “til death do us part,” and never substitute any other word in its place. Heb 13:4 — That is why the family has such holy dignity. True marriage has God’s fingerprint on it, and our family has dignity.

⁵ *Comprehensive* — understanding fully and completely the meaning and importance of something.