

Marriage: The Tie That Frees • Part 1

The Purpose & Goal of Marriage • Genesis 2:18-25

I. INTRODUCTION

A. *What Can I Get For A Rib?*

1. It's the dawn of creation, and Adam is walking around the Garden of Eden admiring the beauty
2. But after a few hours, he begins to wish he could share it with someone
3. The loneliness becomes hard to bear
4. God then asks Adam what was wrong
5. Adam replies that he doesn't have anyone to talk to, so God decides to give him a companion, a woman
6. God tells Adam that the woman will cook for him, wash his clothes, always agree with every decision
 - a. she will bear his children
 - b. and never wake him in the middle of the night to take care of them when they need changing or feeding
 - c. she won't ever nag him
 - d. and she will always be the first to admit she is wrong when they disagree
 - e. she will never have a headache, and will show him all the compassion and understanding he will ever need
7. Adam asks God what a woman like that will cost him
8. God says, "An arm and a leg."
9. So Adam replies, "What can I get for a rib?"
10. And the rest is history

B. *Ten Reasons Why God Created Eve*

1. God knew that Adam would always be lost in the Garden of Eden because he hated to stop and ask for directions
2. God knew that Adam would one day need someone to hand him the TV remote. Men don't; want to see what's on television; they want to see what *else* is on
3. God knew that Adam would never buy a new fig leaf when his wore out and would therefore need Eve to get him a new one
4. God knew that Adam would never make a doctor's appointment for himself
5. God knew that Adam would never remember which night he was supposed to put the garbage out
6. God knew that if the world was to be populated, men would never be able to handle childbearing
7. As keeper of the garden, Adam would never remember where he put his tools
8. The bible shows that Adam needed someone to blame his troubles on when God caught him hiding after he ate the forbidden fruit
9. God knew it's not healthy for a man to talk only about football & surfing

10. When God finished the creation of Adam, He stepped back and said, "I can do better than *that!*"

C. Today

1. We're starting a series today on *Marriage*
2. And I'm excited about it because of the tremendous difference what we will be looking at can make in our home and lives
3. Whether you're married or single, what we're going to be looking at over the next few weeks may very well be some of the most important counsel from the Word of God you will ever hear because it speaks to the most intimate and important of human relationships - marriage!
4. The best place to begin - is at the *beginning*
5. So today, we will be taking a look at the purpose and the goal of marriage
6. Our text will be Genesis 2 . . .

II.TEXT

A. Vs. 18-25

{18} And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."

{19} Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name.

{20} So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.

{21} And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place.

{22} Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.

{23} And Adam said: "This is now 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 mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

{25} And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

1. According to recent statistics, 1 in 2 marriages ends in divorce in the United States, so maybe we should change the name of our country to the *Untied States*
2. Even with the casual attitudes toward marriage that are prevalent in many circles today, you'd be hard pressed to find someone who thinks that divorce is a *good* thing
3. Most people believe marriage should be "*for better or worse*" and till "*death do us part*"
4. Why is it then that the divorce rate is so high?
5. There are many reasons people get divorced, but the mainly, the root cause is a failure to understand the real *purpose and goal* of marriage

6. In all of the marital counseling I have done, both pre- and post-marital, I've asked couples what the *purpose* and *goal* of marriage is
 - a. rare is the man or woman who can give me the right answer
 - b. quite frankly - this is a real tragedy, and I think a large part of the blame has to be laid at the door of the church
 - c. you see, the purpose and goal of marriage are found in the verses we've just read
 - d. and this passage is so well known, you would think everyone would understand what it says about marriage - but few do
 - e. if we don't start *out* with a clear understanding of God's *purpose* for marriage, for why He designed it in the first place -
 - f. it's unlikely any conclusion we draw about marriage will be right
 - g. a solid house begins with a strong foundation
 - h. if the foundation is weak or faulty, the house will experience cracks and may eventually crumble
 - i. and so it is with marriage!
7. So, let's see what these verses tell us about marriage . . .

B. V. 18

{18} And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."

1. If we had begun reading at the beginning, at 1:1, and read straight through to this point, what we would be struck by is the jolt the words "NOT GOOD" give us
 - a. up to this point, at each successive step in the creation, God said, "It is good."
 - b. when all was complete, He said, "It is *very* good."
 - c. so we've developed something of a rhythm, a sense of poetic cadence
 - d. when we read, "It is NOT GOOD that the man should be alone," it's like we've been listening to the string section of a symphony orchestra playing some sweet and majestic piece and suddenly a trumpet player decides to let go with a fast jazz riff in a completely different key
 - e. the Holy Spirit intends to arrest our attention and cause us to say, "Wait a minute. What's going on here?"
2. Note that God declared there was something that was *not good*, *before* the introduction of sin into the creation - this is chapter 2, the fall doesn't take place till chapter 3
3. What could be not good before sin? Wasn't everything created *perfect*?
 - a. yes, everything *was* perfect!
 - b. you see, at this point, God is not *done* creating
 - c. this is still the 6th day
 - d. and the creation of man is not yet finished, there is one final step
 - e. and these verses introduce it
4. God didn't created man to remain alone
 - a. as God observes the aloneness of this first man, He declares that it is not good the way it is

- b. the remedy, the solution - will be a companion, someone like him, but different enough that it is *not* him
5. Now, I want to pause right there and make some observations
- a. first of all, we do not see God making this kind of statement in the creation of the animals
 - b. and the reason why is that the animals were not created in the image of God
 - c. man was! - he bears the indelible mark of the Creator on his soul
 - d. he possesses a spirit which enables him to experience life on a plane the animals cannot
 - e. this narrative gives us a profound insight into *why* God created the universe
 - f. is it possible, that just as it was not good that the man was alone, it was not good that God was alone?
 - g. John tells us that God is love - love finds it's origin and consummation in Him
 - 1) but love by it's very nature is something that has to be given
 - 2) before creation, who could God give love to? He was alone!
 - 3) love, by it's very nature also cannot be forced or coerced -
 - 4) it has to be freely given, volitional
 - 5) so God created a being that is as much like Him as a created being can be -
 - 6) a genuinely free moral agent who can chose to either accept or reject love
 - h. when God says that it is not good that the man is alone, we are getting a glimpse behind the scene as to why God created man in the first place
 - i. the remedy for man's aloneness is a comparable companion - a wife
 - j. all of this is a picture of the greater cosmic companion that God is preparing for Himself - the Bride of Christ - the Church - you and me > we will come back to this next week
6. The purpose of marriage is revealed in this verse - The purpose of marriage is to solve the problem of *loneliness*
- a. but there is a difference between being alone and loneliness
 - b. being along is simply the state of being by ourselves
 - c. but *loneliness* is a painful emotion in which we feel isolated and cut of from significant relationships with others
 - d. and quite frankly being lonely has little to do with the presence or absence of other people
 - e. we've probably all known loneliness in the midst of a crowded room
 - f. it isn't the presence of others that removes loneliness
 - g. it's interaction with others who know us and love us that solves the problem of loneliness
7. But think about Adam at this point in Chapter 2
- a. he has just been created, and has been placed in the Garden of Eden, an idyllic setting
 - b. all he has known for the few hours of his life is being alone, and he is content in it
 - c. from God's perspective, his aloneness isn't good, but from Adam's at this point, it's fine

- d. how many things does God see about us from His perspective that are needs we are totally unconscious of?
- e. the process of spiritual growth is a progressive unfolding of self-knowledge
- f. over time the Holy Spirit reveals to us the needs we have,
- g. then and only then does God set about to meet them
- h. so He *pains* us with revelation, so that we might then see His healing and give Him even more praise and thankfulness as we realize His work in our lives
- i. that's precisely what God did for Adam - Look!

C. V. 19-20

{19} Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name.

{20} So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.

1. For years I read these verses and wondered why they were inserted here
2. V. 18 tells us about God's intention to make Eve, then v. 21 tells us He did
3. Why insert vs. 19 & 20 here? They seem like an interruption to the story of Eve's creation
4. They are no interruption at all - they're vital to the story
5. Remember, Adam is alone, but he does not feel *lonely*!
6. So God gives Adam a task - name the animals
 - a. picture this
 - b. along come the animals - very likely by pairs to facilitate the process of naming them
 - c. Adam begins - "Bull, cow. Rooster, hen. Stag, doe. Stallion, mare. Ram, ewe."
 - d. now, Adam was a sharp guy
 - e. it didn't take him long to realize that in the animal kingdom they all possessed a mate
 - f. one like them but different enough that they could *enjoy* the difference
 - g. I'm sure it wasn't too long before Adam started looking down the line of animals that had queued up before him to see if there wasn't one lone hairless, two legged creature there
 - h. but as the last of the animals passes before him, what God has known and declared as not good, Adam now knows and agrees
 - i. he is alone - even more, he is now lonely! He *feels* it
7. So now that Adam knows his need - God initiates direct action to meet it

D. Vs. 21-23

{21} And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place.

{22} Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.

{23} And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall

be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man.”

1. Notice that Adam recognizes Eve's essential difference from the animals and equality to him
 - a. whereas he had *given* them their own names- and by so doing, had shown his dominion over the animals
 - b. he doesn't name Eve; he gives her *his* name
 - c. he acknowledges she isn't something essentially different from him,
 - d. she is a part of him, and he of her - they share the very same constitution
 - e. and he doesn't have dominion over her as he does the animals
 - f. she is his equal
2. What God does in the creation of Eve is unique - this is not the way He had created the female in the animal kingdom
 - a. Eve is taken *out of* Adam - she is taken from his side, while he slept
 - b. and all of this takes place so that she might be united *back* to him in a special relationship
3. God is giving us a picture of Christ and the Church
 - a. for it was in Jesus' deep sleep on the cross that God took forth from His side that which he fashioned into His bride
 - b. when that spear went in, the blood and water flowed
 - c. and by these you and I, who were created by God in His image, can come back into a special relationship with Him
 - d. the kind of relationship God wants with us is not a distant, indifferent casual one
 - e. we are not like pets he keeps around the house
 - f. He wants no lap dog
 - g. He wants a bride - a companion, someone who can relate to Him in a meaningful way
4. If we would grasp the real potential of both marriage and salvation, it would transform our lives
5. Marriage is but a picture of the kind of relationship and intimacy God wants with us
6. And that leads us to the goal of marriage which we see in the next verses . . .

E. Vs. 24-25

{24} Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

{25} And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

1. There is a rule of bible study called the *Rule of First Use*
 - a. it states that the first time we encounter something in the bible -
 - b. that sets the scene and context for that thing throughout the rest of scripture
2. So these verses, speaking as they do about marriage, lay the foundation for our understanding *of* marriage
3. And v. 24 is the summary statement the Holy Spirit makes about it
4. This verse is so critical to our understanding of marriage it is repeated by both Jesus and Paul [Mt 19:3-9; Eph 5:28-31]

{24} Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

5. We will be re-visiting this in a couple weeks as we take a look at the challenges to marriage
 - a. it has some good counsel for us about leaving and cleaving
 - b. but it's the last part of the verse I want to concentrate on this morning
6. The goal of marriage is to become *one flesh*
 - a. this "becoming" speaks of a process
 - b. a man and woman do not *become* one flesh on that day when they recite their vows and the and declared them husband and wife
 - c. it begins at that point, and carries on in the weeks, months, and years that follow
7. Marriage is a *process* of "becoming" and the goal is ONENESS
8. Now, many people read this and immediately think that the words "one flesh" refer to the sexual union
 - a. and certainly the physical union of a husband and wife is included
 - b. but "one-flesh" means a lot more than just that
 - c. it speaks of two people, who through love, devotion and commitment blend their lives together to make a new life together
 - d. they do not cease to be individuals, but their individuality is taken up into something bigger and better than the sum of the parts
 - e. marriage, as God intended it, takes on a life of it's own that adds to and enhances the life of the participants
9. We've all experienced the reality of this one flesh dimension to marriage in this way:
 - a. think about the married people you know
 - b. it is virtually impossible to think about one of them without thinking of their mate as well
 - c. Charley - Caryn / Jim - Lucy / Mario - Virginia / Dade - Amy
 - d. this is the way it ought to be
10. There is another way to think of becoming one flesh that may help us to get a better grasp on the goal of marriage
11. To be one flesh means to be *intimate* / and to be intimate means to know and be known
12. The essence of becoming one flesh is the process of growing in your knowledge of your mate and them growing in their knowledge of you -
13. And that is why v. 25 has to be added to the equation at this point . . .

{25} And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

13. For years I thought this was merely an interesting postscript to the story of the creation of man
14. But now I see it for what it really is
15. It shows us the kind of intimacy that God desires for marriage
 - a. it's complete - holding nothing back, hiding nothing
 - b. Adam and Eve were without sin
 - c. and because of that, there was no shame, no guilt
 - d. so in their innocence they could be in one another's presence completely

- one and transparent
 - e. their nakedness went well past their bodies - it went to their souls
 - f. it wasn't till after the fall that they hid themselves and tried to cover their nakedness
 - g. they were so guilty and ashamed they tried to hide from God
 - h. and when Adam was confronted with his error, he shifted blame, as did Eve
16. But from the beginning, it was God's original plan that a husband and wife be one, in a relationship unmarred and unhindered by guilt and shame
 17. The goal of marriage is still the same
 - a. God desires a husband and a wife to be one
 - b. learning to love one another and be committed to one another despite our faults and failures
 - c. you see, deep in every one of our hearts is the need to be known and loved, despite our faults . And until we find that, loneliness will prevail
 - d. we long, we ache to go back to the Garden from which we were banned by sin,
 - e. marriage is the place God has given for us to discover what was lost in the Garden
 - f. marriage is the place He has given for us to know and experience the power of His love and forgiveness in terms of a relationship with someone else
 18. And the fact of the matter is, until we find that kind of intimacy, however halting and imperfect it may be, we will feel the sharp piercing stab of loneliness
 19. Marriage itself does not guarantee an end to loneliness - some of you here this morning are married but you are still lonely
 20. And all because you've not known or understood the purpose and the goal of marriage
 - a. you got married however many years ago because you were in love
 - b. but those feelings have now changed, cooled, and in some cases passed
 - c. since you got married because you were in love, now that you no longer feel that way, you wonder why you're still married
 - d. listen - I have an important word for you
 - e. don't cash in your marriage because of a feeling or lack thereof
 - f. realize the incredible potential your marriage possesses!
 - g. in your mate is someone who knows you and you know. Probably better than anyone else
 - h. now, you might be saying, "Yeah, and I don't like what I know. The knowing has not been good."
 - i. it is that very challenge that God can turn into a huge blessing
 - j. He is giving you the chance to love your mate IN SPITE of all that stuff
 - k. just like God loves you in spite of all your stuff
 - l. and besides, isn't there stuff in your life that you know is yucky that you want you mate to love you in spite of? (good theological word there, *yucky*)
 - m. you know there is!
 21. Listen to the collective wisdom of many of couples that have gone before
 - a. feelings come and go

- b. but genuine intimacy and the deep-seated sense of satisfaction and fulfillment that come from it is something that builds and grows over time and is only nurtured by a loyal commitment that is not hindered by feelings or the lack thereof

III. CONCLUSION

A. *Keep At It!*

1. If you're a couple that's been married for several years now and you've just gotten real comfortable in life, I want to encourage you today to press on in the process of becoming one flesh we call marriage
 - a. routine is comfortable - but it can become boring
 - b. don't let your marriage become boring!
 - c. press on into new levels of intimacy, of knowing one another
 - d. when was the last time you really talked about your marriage?
 - e. when was the last time you shared your dreams and desires with one another?
 - f. men,
 - 1) when was the last time you asked your wife what it is you do that *bugs* her?
 - 2) when was the last time you asked her if there was anything about her life she could change, what it would be?
 - g. ladies,
 - 1) do you know what your husband is thinking about the future?
 - 2) have you asked him to articulate to you what it is he finds the most scary about his life?
 - h. what is your mate passionate about? What really drives him or her? Do you know?
 - i. maybe the answer to these things has changed in the last 5 years - do you know?
2. Good marriages can become better;
3. So press on, because the fact of the matter is, if we aren't actively working at our marriages, chances are, they will regress
4. For those couples who aren't doing well, whose marriage has been one long trial - take a look at what it is you expected from marriage
 - a. guys - did you think you were getting a live in maid?
 - b. gals - did you think you were getting a romantic hunk, a shining knight, a chivalrous and industrious provider who would pamper you and take care of you for the rest of your life?
 - c. the best place to start healing your marriage is to go back to the beginning and repent of these selfish motives and expectations and embrace God's plan and purpose for marriage - for your marriage
 - d. to know and be known - and love in spite of it all

B. *You Need Jesus*

1. In the weeks to come we're going to be taking a look at how to deepen

- intimacy and how to deal with challenges to it
2. We'll be taking a look at the role of the husband and the wife
 3. But all of this presumes that you have the presence and power of the Holy Spirit a work in your life
 4. Quite frankly, everything that we have looked at today and will be looking at in the weeks to come can only be grasped and lived by those who are in right relationship with God
 5. Unless the vertical is in right alignment, the horizontal will be unfocused
 6. It ought to be obvious that the kind of marriage we've looked at today requires a healthy dose of trust and forgiveness, to say nothing of love & grace
 7. Where are you going to get these?
 8. You're fooling yourself if you think that you have these in sufficient supply to meet your mates needs
 9. God will use your marriage to bring you to the end of yourself so that you might become the channel through which He can manifest His love and forgiveness to your mate
 10. A good marriage begins and is sustained, by giving yourself to God through faith in Jesus Christ
 11. If you look at a braid it looks like 2 strands woven together
 - a. but the fact is - two strands could never make a braid
 - b. it takes three
 - c. but in the process of weaving, one strand is hidden
 12. So is marriage; it is the weaving together of a man and a woman
 - a. but they cannot do this on their own
 - b. they need the invisible presence of a third if they are to make it
 13. How about you?