

Family God's Way #1 - Two Becoming One

by Bob Hoekstra

This sermon emphasizes God's design for family life, highlighting the importance of partnership in marriage and the value of singleness in devotion to the Lord.

Duration: 1:01:32

Scripture: Genesis 1:26, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 19:3-6, John 15:8, 1 Timothy 1:12-14

Topics: "Marriage And Family", "Gods Design"

Description

The purpose of the sermon series is to learn about family life according to God's way and to be equipped to minister to others in this area. The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding and following God's design for family, as opposed to viewing marriage as a human contract. The speaker highlights the destructive consequences of disregarding God's plan for family and the need for God's grace and mercy in our failures. The sermon also emphasizes the partnership between husband and wife, as exemplified by Adam and Eve, and challenges the modern trend of redefining marriage.

Transcript

The purpose of this series, number one, to let God instruct us and direct us a bit, and build us up concerning family life, His way. Whether we're married or not, it's very important for us to know about family life, God's way. Let's ask Him to teach us about these important matters.

Second, let's allow God to equip us some to minister to other people concerning family, His way. We may have children that we should be ministering to on these matters. We may have relatives who desperately need to hear a word on these matters.

We may have folks we work with day by day that need to hear from the Lord on these matters. We may have friends that are urgently needing a word about family life, God's way. Let's be praying the Lord will equip us for that.

And then third, a word of warning. Let's ask the Lord to give us and give us ears to hear His warnings about those things which are contrary to God's way for family, and therefore are destructive to family life as He has designed it. Our culture certainly stands against the family now.

Many of us, our own experiences or the traditions passed on to us work against family, God's way. And we should know for certain that the enemy of our souls is doing everything he can to destroy our families or

family life or the truth of God on family. So let's ask the Lord to work in these ways.

Let's knit our hearts in prayer right now. Lord, tonight and for these weeks, we ask You to accomplish great things in these three areas. And yet, Lord, we do not want to limit You in any way.

We ask that You would work exceeding abundantly beyond all that we could ask or think in this matter of family, God's way. Lord, we present ourselves to You. We open up our hearts and pray that You will speak to us.

And we thank You so much for Your word, Lord. We need the light and life of it. We thank You for Your Holy Spirit given to guide us into it, but also to change our lives by it.

So have Your way, Your will, Lord. May it be our commitment right now that it be done unto us according to Your word in this important area, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

We'll be looking tonight at the matter of two becoming one. That's the title of our study. We could also give it some alternate titles like the first family, though that's a little bit risky in this day and age, but this was the initial family, let's say.

Another possible subtitle, and I think you'll see it as we go through this passage, and that is a God-ordained partnership. A God-ordained partnership. We're looking at Genesis chapter 2, verses 18 through 25.

And the Lord God said, It is not good that man should be alone, I will make him a helper comparable to him. This is the Lord God Almighty speaking. These are the words of the true and living God.

These are not man's opinions or traditions or experiments with family life or alternate approaches to family life. This is God Almighty speaking to us, telling us about the family. The Lord God said these things.

And He said it's not good that man should be alone. It's not good that man should be alone. In the context of this passage, as well as the context of the early verses of Genesis, the issue is this.

In the context, God is saying it's not good to be without a marriage partner. Now, we'll qualify that in just a moment. Some of you have marriage partners and are wondering, is that really good? And some of you don't have and think, well, that's pretty good.

But God's pronouncement is, it's not good for man to be alone. All of creation up to this point, God Himself pronounced it as good. Except here, He says it's not good.

Why? Not because He did something wrong or improper or bad. It's just that God wasn't finished yet. And He said it's not good for man to be alone.

Now, God Himself has given some exceptions to that general principle, which is generally true unless we fall under one of the exceptions that God gives. If we're alone, we might be in one of God's exceptions to this statement, and then it's good for a season that we be alone if we walk in God's purposes. But generally, it is not good for man to be alone.

Exceptions, one is listed in 1 Corinthians 7.35. We won't stop to read it, but the closing phrase of that verse says that there are God-ordained periods of singleness in all of our lives which are for the securing of undistracted devotion to the Lord. That's a quote from the New American Standard. Now, how does that

work? Well, anyone who is married knows that there are things about married life that can distract you from the Lord.

Now, there also are things in married life that can drive you to the Lord. Take that as an amen. And there are a lot of other things that can cause us to seek the Lord, you know, and we want to know the will of the Lord for the family.

But certainly, God has purpose in singleness, and that it is to find undistracted devotion to the Lord. The responsibilities of family life, though they are God-ordained, can tempt us, entice us, distract us, get our mind off the Lord, our heart off the Lord, and we begin to be either frazzled or worried or concerned or all caught up even in the good things of family life or the problems and challenges of married life. So singleness is designed by God as a period of time to help us secure undistracted devotion to the Lord.

That doesn't mean that there aren't plenty of things without and within that can still distract us, but the Lord knows. He is the one who ordained family life and created it and established it. He knows what's involved, and it can get very distracting.

And so there's a season of time in our lives designed for us to secure undistracted devotion to the Lord. Listen, if you are single right now, here's God's great purpose in your life at this time. He wants you to use this time not singing the praises of how great it is to be single or spending all your money on bumper stickers that happiness is being single and all that or spending all your time out chasing a mate, dreaming about a mate, plotting and planning and trying to get a mate.

Singleness is primarily for securing, that is establishing and developing undistracted devotion to the Lord. It's a time to give great, serious, wholehearted attention to the Lord. It's right when you're married, but you're going to find if you're single it's even a greater challenge when you're married.

Now for some who are in this single life now, some will actually be in it for life. And you may wonder if that's a life sentence, you know. Some want to be single all their lives.

Some never dreamed they might be single, but God has ordained that some people be single for their entire lives. If you want to jot down though, if you want to jot down 1 Corinthians 7.7 and Matthew 19.12, I think it's very clear there which would conform to anyone's personal experience that a person can only walk God's way as a single person all their life if they have the supernatural spiritual gift of celibacy. And not many of us have that gift.

I didn't. It wasn't good for me to be alone. I wish I had used all my single years to secure undistracted devotion to the Lord.

I did not. I had to play catch up later. But I know I did not have the gift of celibacy.

And if you don't have that gift, you will not be single God's way all your life. But some will. And that's the Lord's plan for some, you know.

It's not that they're less of a person, and it's this general rule that it's not good for a man to be alone does not apply in their lives because of this God-ordained supernatural exception. We can't make exceptions to God's general rules, but He can make all of them He wants to, and He does, and then He spells them out for us. Also, 1 Timothy 5.5 is one of these exceptions that it's not good for man to be alone.

1 Timothy 5.5, let's read that. It has some powerful application in it for all of us, actually. But it's about widowhood.

1 Timothy 5.5, now she who is really a widow and left alone, see, this is someone who's alone, it's not good for a man to be alone, and is left alone, trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day. Before marriage, there's a God-ordained period of singleness that is for the purpose of securing undistracted devotion to the Lord. Now, of course, during married life, we should live as unto the Lord, and for the Lord, and from the Lord, and with the Lord.

But for those who are widows or widowers, after the married life is behind them, if they're older, here's the way they're to live. The older are to serve God in a new, undistracted way. They're to trust in God, continue in supplications and prayers night and day.

Verse 14 says the younger widows are to marry and bear children, and they're to enter back into family life. But the older ones, they're an exception to the rule that it's not good for a man to be alone. And they get to enter back into that period of developing more of this undistracted devotion to the Lord, serving Him, praying to Him night and day.

And if you are an older widow, this is what the Lord has for you. And though you may miss those rich married years, the Lord wants to make these years with Him rich as well. And He wants your heart set on Him and forward, not, you know, just lamenting and remembering backwards, but seeking the Lord day and night in earnest prayer.

There's another situation of aloneness that is a major one in the American culture, and even throughout the American Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it relates to the verses in Psalm 68 in the outline. This speaks of a special need. It has to do an application, I think, in the context of our study.

These verses would speak greatly to those who are single parents or perhaps divorced. That is, you are alone, but you're alone in a very unusual way and needy predicament or situation. How about it's not good for man to be alone in that situation? Well, those who are going through the agonies of recent divorce, no, it's not good for man to be alone.

And though there may have been a lot of heartache there, there's a lot of heartache alone too. And those who are single parents would probably readily say it's not good for man to be alone. It's a tough enough job parenting when you have a team doing it.

And usually that doesn't seem enough. Don't we have some more troops around here to handle these kids? But to do it alone is a very difficult expression of it's not good for man to be alone. But those in that aloneness, you know, God always has his provisions.

He's greater than the failures or the needs of man. And Psalm 68 verses 5 and 6, God is a father of the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy habitation. God sets the solitary in families.

He brings out those who are bound into prosperity, but the rebellious dwell in a dry land. Those who are in that special time of need of aloneness, perhaps from divorce or single parenthood or combination even sometimes, certainly it's a time to seek the Lord for direction, sometimes perhaps for forgiveness, but as well for what's described here, his sustaining grace for the helpless and needy. Notice the Lord says in this verse 6 that he sets the solitary in families.

Well, there's hardly anyone more solitary sometimes than that person is divorced or perhaps the single parent. It's a very solitary, lonely life and an impossible one at times. But you know, the Lord sets the solitary in families.

The Lord may give you back family life, but whether he does or not, he's able to place you in the family of God for the resources of family life he has there. In fact, these verses coupled with the predicament of individuals in solitary life from divorce or in single parenthood, these verses have important implications for such vulnerable lives and for their involvement in church life. If you don't have the family your heart aches for, you know where the Lord wants to develop your family right now? What's missing in your home, he wants to supplement and develop with the family of God.

After all, this is our true family. Not that it erases our earthly household family, but Jesus himself, when his family came for him and thought he'd kind of flipped out, wanted to talk to him, take him home and kind of reconsider this Messiah thing. He said with perhaps a wave of his hand, these are my mother and brother and sisters, those who do the will of God.

So the Lord wants to make a family force in the household of God. And it's another word to those of us who have families, household families and are in the church of Jesus Christ. The Lord wants us to be very graciously caring for reaching out to loving those who are in the solitary life that God wants to set in the life of the family of God.

So it's not good for man to be alone generally. And there are only a couple of exceptions that God has given. So Genesis 2.18, the Lord says, I'll get a helper comparable to him.

I will make him a helper comparable to him, verse 18. That is, God was going to provide a partner meet. We say help meet, it means a helper meet or fit or suitable for man.

Or you could paraphrase it, complementary or corresponding to man. The same as man, yet different, right? I mean, we're humans, but we're different. We might question each other's humanity sometimes, you know.

But we're the same, and yet we're different. That's because we are corresponding partners. Not identical, but designed in every way to fit together.

And that's the plan of the Lord. But partners for what? A help meet, a suitable partner, for what? Well, in the previous chapter, Genesis 1, verses 26 through 28, the purpose of this partnership was given. Genesis 1, 26 through 28, Then God said, Let us make man in our image according to our likeness.

Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. So God created man, that is, mankind, in His own image. In the image of God He created him, that is, mankind.

Then it elaborates, male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it, have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth. Man and woman, humankind, would be made in the image and likeness of God.

Now, what is that exactly? Well, we could do well probably to study hours on that alone, but sufficient for our arena of study tonight to say that men and women are significantly like God. That is, we are essentially

spiritual beings like God is, as though that spiritual life is lived out in a physical tent. Because we're spiritual beings as God is, we can fellowship with God, we can learn to love God, serve God, and be a demonstration of some of the characteristics or attributes of God.

So in the image and likeness of God, men and women, husbands and wives, God-ordained partners, are to have dominion over the earth, be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, are the words used here. To put it another way, man was to be a steward of God's creation, obeying God, serving God, answerable to God, and demonstrating some of the characteristics of God one to another, showing Him forth. Now, this image and likeness of God fell into disaster in the fall of Adam and Eve.

You can still get a hint that man is made in the image and likeness of God. You know, there's a spiritual aspect to him, though he's dead spiritually without Christ, and he has creativity and has some exercising of authority, things that are really just inherently for God alone unless He gives them to others, but it's just a faint glimmer of the Creator. Colossians 3, 9 through 11, let us know how we get back from the disaster of the fall into the place of serving the Lord as partners, husbands and wives.

Keep the context in mind. Genesis 2, God's going to bring a partnership together, a helper comparable to man, and their purpose is in the image and likeness of God to be stewards of His creation, fulfilling His will. But in sin, Adam and Eve fell.

Colossians 3, 9 through 11 tell us now how we can still walk in the fulfilling of the purposes of God for a husband and a wife. Colossians 3, 9 through 11, Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, that unsaved life without Christ, and have put on, because they're believers in the Lord, the new man. If anyone is in Christ, he's a new creation.

2 Corinthians 5.17 And you have put on the new man who is renewed, who goes through the process of becoming more and more like the Lord, the renewing process, in or by knowledge, that is, getting to know the Lord, according to the image of Him who created Him. Restored, renewed to know God, and be a demonstration of an expression of the image of the God who created Him. As we grow in Christ's likeness, we are fulfilling Genesis 1, 26 through 28, showing forth the image and likeness of Christ, of our Creator.

Verse 11, Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, and Galatians adds, nor male nor female, as far as spiritual, essential nature goes. But Christ is all and in all. So now today, a husband and a wife, the God-ordained partnership, when we come together to be stewards of God, and to express God and serve God, we can do it through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Because in Him we are being restored to a demonstration of the character and likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ, our God and our Creator and our Redeemer. And of course, those who are single and are supposed to now be securing this undistracted devotion to the Lord, can be going through this same process while God is preparing them for marriage partnership, if they do not have that calling and gift of celibacy. Now to add one other verse on this, John 15.8, and this sort of fills out in a significant sense the Genesis 1 and 2 calling for husbands and wives, the God-ordained heavenly partnership in God's plan.

John 15.8, Remember in Genesis, be fruitful and multiply. Genesis 15.8, to bring it up into the new covenant and the days of the church. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, so you will be, or prove yourselves to be, my disciples.

Now in the day and age of grace, the day of the church, the day of disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Genesis 1.26 and 28 mandate is given additional dimension and breadth and depth for God's people in a verse like this and many other places in the New Testament. Now we are disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are followers of the Lord.

And as we serve Him and seek Him, it's to be done in our lives and our families, aiming at not only populating the earth with humankind, but even more importantly, populating the earth with spiritual kind, spiritual fruit. It's the will of the Lord Jesus Christ that we bear much fruit. And that's what discipleship is expressed in, fruitfulness.

Now for all of this that the Lord was calling man and woman to, it certainly was a job for a partnership. To go back to Genesis, Genesis 2.19-20, no partner was found for Adam, even though it was not good that he be without a partner. Verses 19 and 20.

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. So Adam gave names to all the 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, a partner fit for him. In this great calling of God to be a steward of God, serving and displaying the character of God, he needed a partner. It wasn't good for man to be alone in this great task.

But when all the creation was brought before him, there was no partner comparable to him. Though we do see already man's stewardship functioning right here at this point, we also see somewhat the image of God in Adam's authority as he acts to name those animals, his intelligence as he thinks through how to do it, and his creativity even. And God is creator.

And the creativity of man is part of the image of God in man. And the creativity here in naming these animals is a part of this whole matter because the terms used here infer meaningful names were being given, that the names had some sense of expression of what that animal was. However, here's the point.

There was no suitable, comparable, corresponding fit partner for Adam. You know, the old line, a dog is man's best friend. Didn't wash here.

He didn't have the partner he needed. So what does God do? Next issue, a partner is provided. Verses 21 through 23.

And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam. Now this is fascinating. Amazing, really profound, if not provocative.

And he slept and he took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man he made into a woman. And he brought her to the man.

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. She shall be called Eshah because she was taken out of Esh.

He didn't name any other creature Eshah. Which means it came right out of his very being. Boy, he saw this was different.

Aha! I think this is what I was looking for. In verse 21, notice this. The Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam.

And then he, God, took one of his ribs. I mean, the language here is very forceful. This is God at work, not man.

God's doing, man's sleeping. What a picture. See that? The Lord God did this.

The Lord God was at work. The Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam. And he, the Lord God, took one of his ribs.

God at work. And he took one of those ribs and fashioned it into a woman. Made one of those ribs into a woman.

This is God at work. Now, why is there not just more dust here turned into humanity? Remember? Chapter 2, verse 7, the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground. Why did God form man of the dust of the ground and then form woman of man? Well, we certainly can't know all the profound reasonings of God.

His thoughts are not ours, and they are higher than ours, like the heavens above the earth. But God both gives revelation in his word as well as wisdom in the things of the Lord. Why not just take another pile of dust and make a woman out of it? Well, one thing this seems to do is definitely more intimately relate man and woman.

And even Adam got it. Oh, this is now bone of my bones and flesh of mine. This is really, this is me.

Another thing, it not only intimately relates man and woman, but an interesting thing too, it makes woman twice refined from dust. I hear a combination of wait a minute and right on. Now, before we leap in a fleshy manner into that, that does not imply superiority just as all.

But be encouraged, just as Ephesians 5.22 does not imply to the woman inferiority. Elsewhere we see in the word, we are of spiritual equality. And we'll get to Ephesians in a few weeks as well.

But it does underline this fact that the woman is created a more delicate instrument. 1 Peter 3.7 calls her the weaker vessel. You could actually paraphrase, if not translate that word weaker as more delicate.

The woman is the more delicate instrument. That's one of the differences between men and women. We had a lot of fun with this up at the camp a few weeks ago, thinking about the fact that man is made out of dust, just real earthy, just a pile of dirt breathed upon.

And woman is taken out of man and fashioned into a woman. Well, the scriptures say she therefore is the more delicate instrument. You could say that a man is kind of like a dump truck.

Well, the Lord took a part of that dump truck and fashioned it into a more delicate instrument. And you might liken women to more like microscopes. Yeah, I've noticed that.

She's always examining me. Well, she's the more delicate instrument. What do microscopes do? They look into things, you know.

And we just go driving around, blustering around, hauling things here and there, you know. But it's a good partnership. What would a dump truck be without a microscope? But on the other hand, what would a

microscope be without a dump truck? Honey, please plant that tree.

It's hard for microscopes to plant trees, you know. But sweetheart, please help me figure this out. It's hard for dump trucks to figure things out, you know.

It's a great partnership. That's the way God has ordained it. This is the end of side A. To listen to the rest of the message, please turn the tape over now.

Honey, please plant that tree. It's hard for microscopes to plant trees, you know. But sweetheart, please help me figure this out.

It's hard for dump trucks to figure things out, you know. It's a great partnership. That's the way God has ordained it.

So then that rib the Lord God made into a woman. And notice, God made that rib into a woman. Adam needed a partner and God made Eve.

He didn't make Ed. Really, quite contrary to the new trend in America and Europe and even around the world. I mean, it is a strategic, critical issue, though many are bucking against it, trying to push it aside.

Then the rib the Lord God made into a woman. God made a woman as a partner for Adam. This powerfully, politically overwhelming homosexuality movement is an outright violation of the plan of God from the very beginning of mankind.

In fact, one of the great signs of judgment upon a culture like Sodom and Gomorrah and back through history, Rome and elsewhere, is the extension of homosexuality out into the culture, not as something abhorrent to guard against and be delivered from, but something to be tolerant of, if not promoting, if not giving political power to. But you know, there's another thing. Not only the homosexuality movement.

That's just part of man moving against God's plan. There's a more subtle movement that's been going on for some years before the homosexual movement became so predominant in our society, and that's the unisex movement. You know, clothes and haircut and language, all the same.

Just sort of, I guess, what do you say, androgynous. I'll never forget the first time I really heard women cursing like sailors. I didn't lead totally a sheltered life.

I grew up in a pastor's home, but when I hit 15, I went out in the world sick, deep, heavy duty for 10 years. Soon back to the Lord, down at the beach one day with our kids on vacation from Texas out here in California seeing family. Some of them were playing volleyball, and I used to love to play that game down at the beach too, and they were playing mixed doubles, which was a lot of fun.

I said, hey guys, come look. Here's what Dad used to do. You know, we'd get over there and sit down, and in five minutes, all of a sudden they started talking, and the action got kind of hot, and the cursing and the swearing and the profanity and the filth, and that was just the two gals.

Really? I couldn't believe my ears. Well, that's just part of it, you know. It doesn't matter if you're male or female.

You know, you'll talk like the most rowdy, drunk sailor, and these were like teenager college gals trying to be with it. That's the kind of world we're living in now. All the way from language to dress to goals to roles,

everything, it's just unisex.

You know, it is wrong and disastrous even to remove God's built-in gender distinctions. They don't prove, indicate, or promote superiority or inferiority in any sense or case at any level, but they are strategic in that God created them. Men and women have God-given spiritual equality, but we also have strategic God-given differences all the way from physical anatomy to the fact that a dump truck and a microscope are different in their nature and their makeup, you know, just their personality, just their characteristics.

So God made a woman out of that rib, and He brought her to the man. God brought Eve to Adam. Note how Adam got his wife.

God fashioned the rib into a woman and brought her to Adam. And you know, God can still bring men and women together in a divine manner today. What could Adam have done then to get his mate? Well, the listings in the computer dating programs were very low those days.

Only just a visionary dream, you know. They didn't have even that, certainly, surely, God-ordained, essential, know-the-way-you-can-do-it, but Christian singles group here, there, and everywhere. How did God ever do this? How did Adam ever find a mate? Well, God went to work.

God made the woman and brought the woman to the man. And this is the first family, this is the initial family, this is the beginning of family life, and this is the prototype for us. When we as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ get into a frantic, fleshly quest for a mate, it's not necessary, and it's inappropriate for the children of God.

There is even among the Christian community kind of a computer dating craze. I saw them advertised in one of the so-called Christian periodicals. And also hitting every singles group in the area is kind of common so often.

But it is really not what you call preparing for family God's way. In fact, often Christian parents kind of drive, entice, or coax their kids in that direction. You know, marriage becomes the great goal instead of knowing God.

And here's how you get married. You got to do these things and kind of get marriable. Then you got to get out there in the way so the dump truck will run over you.

They don't know enough to select you, you know. Well, you know, marriage and family life, though it involves this amazing partnership between the dump truck and the microscope, is a work of God. Listen guys, the gals are having fun, but God made us.

And He made us the way He wanted us. For just what He knew we'd have to haul around, right? And He made gals just the way He knew was right. And then He brought the two together.

You know another thing about singles? Singles are not second-class Christians. Sometimes the church treats them that way. Sometimes they feel they are that way.

They are not second-class Christians. Our identity, our resources, who we are, what matters, all comes out of who we are in the Lord Jesus Christ. And we need to encourage singles to look to Him, find their all-in-all in Him, while they're waiting for any other aspect of His will for them, and then treat them as we would desire to be treated.

Do unto them as we would have them do unto us. Treat them as full members of the body of Christ, as those who, according to Colossians 2, 9, and 10, are complete in Jesus Christ. You say, well, it's not good for man to be alone.

Ah, except for those period God ordains. And when those who have fallen or been stricken or are gone the wrong path, the Lord's grace and mercy is so powerful and abundant to cover them and give them that new status of a time to seek undistracted devotion to the Lord. May the Lord just show us how to treat one another as one big family of God, not 14 different categories with their own strengths and weaknesses.

We all have the same strengths and weaknesses, you know. It's kind of simple. Our weaknesses are us.

Our strengths are Him. We're kind of universal in that. You know, it's kind of simple, kind of straightforward.

And I love what Adam was doing when he found his wife. If you want to copy someone's wife or mate-finding technique, just let God put you into a deep sleep. Just leave it up to Him.

As far as that goes, just go to sleep on it. I mean, this is such a beautiful picture. Adam is sleeping, God is working.

And the end result was a God-ordained marriage. When God brought my wife to me, I was in a deep spiritual coma. I guess He knew me.

He knew that was the time to do it, you know. And I set out chasing her in that coma. The amazing thing is, God caught me.

You know, God has His ways. Even if we manipulate wrong, eventually if the heart is broken and humble, which I'll tell you, God may do, it's amazing how He can make all things new and cause all things to work together for good. Then in verse 23, Adam basically said, Yes, this is my partner.

Now I have a helper suit or corresponding to me. So it's not good for man to be alone. That brief season in Adam's experience of the past, and there is his mate provided by God.

Now we're going to look at the end of the passage, the ongoing partnership pattern. Verses 24 and 5, Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Verse 24, therefore, therefore, what is going to follow this phrase therefore, is implying this, that since God ordained and established the family, this is how we're to respond. Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother. When God creates a new household in this day and age, everyone after the first household, here's what would happen because God ordained it this way.

A man shall leave his father and mother. There's to be a change in primary human allegiance when God institutes a new home. The parents of each, of the new husband and wife, are to be honored all the days of their life, but they're not to be followed as parents are to follow children, or children are to follow parents.

I was getting too contemporary there. That's the new way. Parents follow children.

But God has ordained parents to speak the direction to the children. Children are ordained to follow parents. Now that changes when marriage comes.

We're to leave and cleave. We're to turn from following the parents and follow the Lord together holding on to our partner. A man shall leave his father and mother.

There's a new household and a new way to walk. Following the Lord and primary allegiance to our mate, not to our parents. I wonder how many households are constantly in turmoil, if not devastated because of that very principle being violated.

Mates not leaving and cleaving. Mates not turning from primary interest and attention and time and allegiance to their parents and giving it to their mate. God tells us, Therefore, since he ordained it all this way, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife.

That is, the man becomes one with his wife before God. The two become one flesh. Not that husbands and wives do not have individual spiritual accountability to God and must maintain a walk with God.

That's very clear that all of us, whatever our role, calling or responsibility, we must do that. But God still wants to treat us as a unit, not separately. And even our walk with the Lord will be affected greatly by our mate and vice versa.

Joined to his wife, the man becomes one with his wife. He's to cleave to her, cling to her, hold tightly to her in every way. And they shall become one flesh.

Two becoming one flesh. Two becoming one. Is that an event or a process? Well, it's both, isn't it? In the sight of God, the moment you're married, the event has taken place, and the two, now God wants to treat them as a unit.

It's also a process, though, growing in the implications of that. What's described here, and do we think of our homes, our marriages like this? Think about it. What's described here is a fully unified partnership.

Think of that. If you're married, here's God describing what he has created in your life. He wants to see a fully unified partnership.

Unified physically, emotionally, intellectually, volitionally, decisions and wills and dreams and plans as a unit. Not pulling against each other, not one beating the other, not one dragging, pushing or shoving the other, but one acting as a unit. And especially, of course, spiritual oneness.

Both seeking the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength. That's the binding reality of a Christian home. We'll look more at that next week.

You know, one of the implications of this, and guys, listen up so you don't get a dig in the ribs on this one. Be alert and save yourself. Listen, an implication for us especially, though maybe a gal too.

It seems like gals, it seems like microscopes are more designed for this. Two becoming one makes a continual flow of loving, honest communication essential. Two becoming one.

You got to share your heart and mind and soul, right? How can you practically grow in oneness if you each are a mystery to the other? It can't be. And I know this gets kind of convicting because, you know, though I was always a foot shorter than Gary Cooper, I was always kind of a yup, nope kind of a guy, you know? I wore it as a badge of honor to carry on any conversation with a simple yup or nope. You know? Yup.

Yup. Nope. And it seemed fully sufficient, you know? Boy, I tell you, it doesn't work in marriage.

Right? Because two are becoming one. Two are one in the sight of God and if they're going to live like that, there has to just be an overflow of communication. Gals, you seem more gifted in that.

It was dangerous to say, wasn't it? But I think that's true. I think God has created that way. Gals.

And, guys, we seem kind of the quiet type, you know? Thereby wanting to look like the strong quiet type. Sometimes we're just quiet. Stubborn quiet type, maybe.

Selfish quiet type, you name it. But it doesn't fit marriage, you know? If two are going to become one practically, just a flow of communication. And, you know, God's used my microscope to readjust this dump truck.

And I don't like Yup Nope that much anymore. I fall into it sometimes. I know you're going to quiz her, so I might as well tell you.

I fall into it sometimes. But I've come to love communication with my wife. Next to talking to the Lord, the favorite one I like to talk to now is my wife.

I constantly learn from her. I'm blessed. And I see she yearns to hear from me.

And may the Lord teach us this. It's important to our marriages. Then Genesis 225, they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Putting it in the full context of the word, this definitely is not promoting nudist, Christian nudist colonies or something. You know? There are many other things to add to it before we leave next chapter to their clothes. But this certainly does picture an open and trusting oneness of life, right in the context of what we're talking about.

Now remember Matthew 19, 3 through 6. Just a reminder, this partnership, men, women, brothers, sisters, this partnership is for life. It's not something we try out. It's not something we get into and say, well, we can always bail out if it gets rough.

Matthew 19, 3 through 6. The Pharisees also came to him, testing him and saying to him, Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason? And he answered and said to them, Have you not read that he who made them at the beginning made them male and female? And here Jesus quotes what we've been studying tonight. And said, For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. So then, they are no longer two but one flesh.

That's pretty straightforward, isn't it? They're not separate. They're now a unit. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.

Since marriage is a God-ordained union, those entering into it, it's something God is doing. So man is not to undo it. Marriage is for a lifetime.

Now God is merciful and gracious. And he also has given some exceptions here. One, if you want to write it down, Matthew 5, 32, is sexual unfaithfulness.

Another is desertion, where an unbeliever just will not have the mate around, 1 Corinthians 7. And of course, God is gracious for those who stumble, period, in what he can do to restore life and put things back together. But God's design and desire is that marriage is for a lifetime. This is so unlike man.

Man looks on marriage as a human contract. You put it together on your own terms, not God's, and you do with it what you want, and you're in it to get what you want out of it anyway. And you take it as far as you can, and you can always bail out.

That's the wisdom of man. That's disaster before God as well as in people's lives. And in America, we're devastated by this.

And many of us in the church, we've been hit heavy too, haven't we? Let's take the last few minutes for a concluding word in reflection and from the Scripture. The word of God is not only enlightening, it is also convicting and requires heart responses in our lives. Also, as we've been listening to the word of the Lord tonight, it's good to remember that our enemy is a condemner.

And every one of us here tonight, we have enough failure before God's standards on the family to be wide open to his accusing arrows. If he had to throw arrows of condemnation and accusation at you and me, and the target was the areas we've failed before God on these issues, every one of us would have a giant bullseye that he couldn't miss. So we must not forget that.

As God is teaching us, Satan doesn't mind to go to church and condemn us. In fact, he probably gets some of his best work done at church, you know. Maybe the least expected, but feels he needs to get his word in too.

So let's, in conclusion, with these last couple of Scriptures, close the door on the enemy while opening it wide to the Lord. By concluding with what he can do in our lives, no matter where we are on these issues tonight. For example, 1 Corinthians 15.10 is a great word of hope.

Whether we failed a little or a lot, or made great progress and want more, or have seen fruit and need to be reminded how and why it came in our homes, 1 Corinthians 15.10. But by the grace of God I am what I am, the Apostle Paul said, and his grace toward me was not in vain, but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. The Apostle Paul became an exceedingly fruitful disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. And here we see how he did it.

It was by the grace of God. I am what I am by the grace of God. I labored, but not me, it was the grace of God which was with me.

Someone might say, yeah, but he was an Apostle. Yeah, but don't forget what he was before he was an Apostle. And that's our last Scripture of the evening, 1 Timothy 1.12-14. Think of what you have been in the past, or what you might be right now needing God's grace.

If you're under conviction greatly in need. 1 Timothy 1.12-14, Paul wrote, And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry. Although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man, but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

How many unbelieving ignorant things have we done? And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. Now think about this. Paul was formerly a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and just a bad mouth, an insolent man.

Yet God's grace was exceedingly abundant as it supplied the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. And that faith and love in Jesus Christ by the grace of God cleansed and changed Paul's life. And praise the

Lord, that grace of God can do the same thing in our lives.

Tonight, by the abundant grace of God, and there's no other hope nor other way, we need to respond to the Lord and to His word for us. We've heard, by the grace of God at work in us, let's respond to what the Lord has said. Four suggestions, maybe one or more, the Lord has for your heart.

One, some may need to come in repentance to the Lord Jesus Christ for new life in Jesus. You may be a single, you may be a mate, married, but you don't have the Lord. You have some concern about this issue, or you have some concern about your family and mate, you're here listening to God on this issue.

The most critical issue for family life is have God in there working in lives. He's the maker of the home. We're going to talk about that as the weeks go by.

And some tonight, as we pray, may need to just say, Lord Jesus, that's where I need to start. I need you to forgive my sins and my rebellion and my path. Cleanse me, make me new as I follow you.

Second, some may need to go humbly and repentantly to the Lord, believers who are married or singles who are needing to secure undistracted devotion to the Lord. Some may need to go humbly and repentantly to the Lord for a fresh, clean, new start and a fresh new walk with the Lord. Perhaps that's a word personally or concerning your family.

And the mercies of the Lord are new every day. Third, perhaps some need to ask forgiveness from your mate or seek the Lord for a new spirit of oneness concerning your mate. God will bless that if you humbly respond.

See, God gives grace to the humble. Every one of these possible implications call for the humbling of the heart. But that's where God gives grace.

And that's what changes lives. That's what makes a blasphemer and a persecutor and a bad mouth into a great, fruitful apostle. It wasn't that some can do it and some can't.

It was the grace of God changed that man's life from Saul to the apostle Paul. That same grace is available for us. John 1 says, and we have all received of his fullness, grace up on grace.

It's abundantly available for us. Fourth and last possible implication, maybe others the Lord is putting on your heart, but this one, some may need to seek God afresh and let him handle bringing you his mate for you. Maybe you're single.

And maybe you're missing right now the goal of singleness, which is developing undistracted devotion to the Lord. Maybe on your mind all the time is getting that mate. Maybe your activities are all designed to secure that mate.

No, aim at securing undistracted devotion to the Lord. Just kind of go into a sleep on that marriage thing and let God bring his Adam or Eve to you. Let's pray together.

Dear Heavenly Father, we call upon your name. We thank you so much for your word. We rejoice in you and your word.

We bless your holy name for your holy plan. Thank you that you ordain partnership as we go forth to serve you and to declare you and to live you out before mankind. Lord, work in our lives in all the ways you've

spoken tonight.

We humble ourselves before you, Lord. There's not one of us here tonight that has not come short of this glorious standard, the partnership you're showing us tonight. Forgive us, Lord, of our shortcoming.

Lord, even right now we pray for those among us that may need to bow the heart to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Lord, thank you that it's by your grace through faith as we trust in you for salvation that man is saved. Lord, stir the hearts of those who do not know you.

Even right now in the sanctuary of their heart, as your spirit convicts and woos and calls to say, Lord Jesus, I'm sorry. I give up. I stop.

I repent. I humble myself. I've sinned.

I've gone my way. Lord, cleanse me. Give me new life.

I want to be a disciple of yours. And Lord, for those who need to come before you for a humbling and a cleansing for their family life, their misbehavior, their carelessness, their neglect, disregard, or even cruelty or foolishness. Lord, humble hearts right now.

Lord, make hearts willing to say, Lord Jesus, forgive me. I was wrong. Lord, for any that need to reach out to their mates tonight and just give them a word of love and just tell them humbly that they're sorry for failing, for wronging, for hurting, for grieving.

And Lord, for any who are single among us that need to be refocused on undistracted devotion to Jesus Christ, Lord, may they humbly come to you and ask that your spirit fill them to overflowing to seek after you. Lord, in all these things, we're coming by your grace, needing your grace. And we pray by your grace, you'll open the windows of heaven and pour out your spirit upon us, Lord, touching our lives, our walks, our homes, doing a great and mighty work for the glory of your name, because these partnerships you've given us, Lord, they're really yours.

So we pray this all in Jesus name. Amen.

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