

Adam and Eve's Impact on Marriage

by Raymond C. Ortlund Jr.

The sermon explores the impact of Genesis 1-2 on marriage, emphasizing the importance of male headship, the value of showing honor to one another, and the unity of the Bible.

Duration: 1:07:51

Scripture: Genesis 1:1, Psalm 43:3

Topics: "Marriage"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the significance of the union between a man and a woman in marriage. He refers to the biblical story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, highlighting how God created Eve as a companion for Adam. The speaker emphasizes that this pattern of couples pairing off is universal and good. He also mentions the importance of God's presence in the marriage relationship. Overall, the sermon emphasizes the importance of marriage and the role it plays in reflecting God's design for human relationships.

Transcript

This message was given at the Building Strong Families Conference held in Dallas, Texas, March 20th through the 22nd of 2000. This conference was sponsored by the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood and Family Life Ministries. Following the message, there will be information on how to order additional materials on building a strong family.

It's great to see you, and I consider it a privilege to be with you and to think together with you now about these important matters. In Psalm 43, the psalmist says and prays, Send forth your light and your truth. Let them guide me.

And that's what we need in the church in our generation, for God to send forth His light and His truth so that we would be guided. Let them bring me to your holy mountain, to the place where you dwell. God's truth is not an end in itself.

God's truth is not the destination. God's truth is an infallible road map to the destination. The destination is God Himself.

Send forth your light and your truth. Let them guide me. We want to go somewhere.

Let them bring me to your holy mountain, to the place where you dwell. The reason, ultimately, why we care so deeply about the matters we're going to consider today in Genesis 1-3 is that we want to be guided to God. We want to be in that place where He dwells.

Let's pray together. Now, for that we ask, for that we pray, dear Lord, do not leave us in the barrenness of ourselves, but lead us, according to Your Word and through Your Word, to the place where You dwell, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

Now, Genesis 1-3. This is high stakes territory. These chapters establish the basic understandings which shape our whole concept of ourselves as men and women.

These chapters are not only majestic in their own sweep of vision, but the New Testament also acknowledges and demonstrates their permanent significance for us today. Now, egalitarian interpreters agree that as Genesis 1-3 go, so goes their whole position. For example, I was interested to find in the winter 1996 edition of Academic Alert, which is a promotional piece that InterVarsity Press puts out.

It features their new books and so on. In the winter 1996 edition, Stanley Grenz's book was featured, *Women in the Church*, and Rodney Clapp, the publisher, interviewed him for this new publication and asked him, we've been embroiled in this debate for the last 20 years. What are the key matters of contention right now? After 20 years of discussion, what are the key matters of contention right now? Grenz answered, the foundational premise of the complementarian position seems to be that there is a hierarchy of male over female within the creation order itself.

Now, let's overlook for just a moment that Grenz leaves out one half of the complementarian position, namely male-female equality, but he is correct to identify the creation order itself as the foundation of the complementarian position, and indeed as the foundation of the egalitarian position, or at least that's what they would claim. But whoever wins the argument over Genesis 1-3 is bound to win the whole biblical argument. In fact, later in that same interview, Clapp, the publisher, asks Grenz, the author, what's the strongest complementarian argument? Interesting question.

And Grenz answered, I think the strongest argument that the complementarian has is the argument that the Bible indicates that God ordained a hierarchy of male over female from the beginning, that is, in creation. Now again, he conveniently overlooks half of our position, but he does concede the strength of the complementarian interpretation of Genesis 1-3, which is simply another way of acknowledging the clarity of these chapters on the issue. In other words, our position is strong, not because we are wise, but because God's word is plain.

Now let's look at Genesis 1. There's less disagreement on this important chapter, and more to rejoice in together. Genesis 1:26, Then God said, Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground. The fact that we came from God in his image and according to his likeness defines us upward in relation to God, not downward in relation to the lower creation.

We find our identity in God and nowhere else. And we are to rule over the lower creation as God's image bearers and representatives. And we can see in this verse how the author Moses goes on at length about rule over this part and this part, but the universal scope of our sovereignty.

It is to be complete, verse 27. So God created man in his own image. In the image of God he created him.

Male and female he created them. Now, in moving from prose up through verse 26 to verse 27, suddenly the Torah shifts from prose to poetry to convey a sense of wonder at this climactic moment in the creation account. But the third line there, male and female he created them, draws attention to itself.

Most Hebrew poetry is two lines. You have an A line and a B line. Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? A line, B line.

But when you have A line, B line, C line, very often that third line is there to draw attention to itself and that's what we have in this case. So God created man in his own image, A line. In the image of God he created him, B line.

Now here's the C line. Male and female he created them. Something new is added there.

Namely, the sexuality, male and female, of the newly created Adam. So together, as male and female, they stand alone in all the world as the image of God, even in their simple, humble sexuality. It does not say man and woman he made them, but male and female he made them.

Verse 28, God blessed them and said to them, Be fruitful and increase in number. Fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.

A couple of things here. Verse 1, God places us, both male and female, under his blessing and he speaks to us. Back in verse 22, God also pronounced the blessing, but it says, and God blessed, I'll look at it more carefully before I do it from memory, God blessed them, these creatures of the lower order, God blessed them and said, Be fruitful and multiply.

He did not say to them, he just spoke out as it were over them. But when God creates us, he speaks to us, establishing personal relationship with us, both male and female alike, without distinction. And he calls male and female together to rule over the lower creation.

Psalms 8, as you know, is a kind of poetic commentary on Genesis 1. What is man, you know, and so forth. And Psalm 8 wonders at the heavens that God has made, but then stands back and wonders even more at the stature of man. Psalm 8 is a poetic celebration of the theology of Genesis 1. Now, the title of our seminar is Adam and Eve before and after the fall, the impact on marriage.

So here's Genesis chapter 1. We've just highlighted some of the features there. Now, what's the impact on marriage of Genesis chapter 1? Let me suggest a couple of things. One, if male and female together were created uniquely as God's own image bearers and earth subduers, then our equality and worth and responsibility should reach our hearts with wonderful power.

Several years ago, World Magazine, which almost never fails to be interesting, World Magazine had an editorial in which they articulated something that I've struggled to say for a long time. This editorial lamented... It's the May 6, 1995 issue. It lamented those evangelical Christians who, quote, can recite every reference in the Bible to male headship in marriage, but never mention the parallel instructions for men to love their wives with the same tenderness Christ showed for the church.

They've learned the proverb that if you spare the rod, you'll spoil your child. But they never quote Paul when he warns fathers not to be so overbearing that they produce bitterness in their children. Ecclesiastically, these are the folks who get their doctrinal details right but can't make the same doctrine

attractive to anyone.

They applaud the apostles when they speak about discipline, but get skeptical if you quote those same apostles about being all things to all people. The point is, the point I'd like to make from that interesting comment, is that we Christians who do understand the biblical validity of male headship are just as fallen as egalitarians who deny it. And we need to make sure that we hear this word from God in Genesis chapter 1 just as clearly as we hear God's word in Genesis 2. Let's give the world no reason to fear and despise Christian marriage.

And let's give the world no reason to fear and despise the Christian church by failing to demonstrate the equal value of women in how we treat each other. Several years ago, and I can't remember right now if it was the New York Times or the Wall Street Journal. I have it buried in my file somewhere.

If it's in my file, that means it's lost. But one of the two papers had an article on Redeemer Presbyterian Church in America, Redeemer PCA in Manhattan. The PCA is my own denomination.

We do not ordain women to the office of elder for scriptural reasons. It's a matter of principle. But in this article, it was so interesting to me that a woman there at Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Manhattan who had belonged to the PCUSA before she came to Redeemer, and in the PCUSA, they do ordain women to the office of elder.

This woman said that when she came into this conservative PCA church, she found that she was taken more seriously and listened to more carefully than when she had gone to the PCUSA church where she could have qualified for eldership. That's the way it's supposed to be. That's working.

And Genesis 1 calls us to set up a high value of showing honor to one another. Psalm 8 says that God has crowned us with glory and honor, and we should do that with one another. We should crown one another with glory and honor.

Now, let's look at Genesis 2, verses 18-25, and this is where we have less agreement with our egalitarian friends, more controversy. In Genesis 1, we see male and female in relation to God. Now, in Genesis 2, we see man and woman in relation to each other.

Now, before I get into the passage, this beautiful, beautiful passage, let me just explain to you where I'm coming from on how I even do my Bible reading. I believe in the unity of the Bible. That is to say, the theological coherence of all the teachings of the Bible together.

It all fits together so that one passage helps us to interpret another. Evangelical egalitarians should believe that too. But they don't always let the power of the Bible's unity register its full force in their arguments.

Maybe because the rest of the Bible is not going to help them as much. And I've had egalitarian friends accuse me of reading into Genesis 2 my understanding of what's going on there. But I'm not doing that.

I'm trying very hard not to do that. I'm allowing the Apostle Paul, when you get outside Genesis 2 and 3, the next biblical author who argues most clearly, most intentionally, most explicitly, and against opposition on questions of manhood and womanhood is the Apostle Paul. 1 Corinthians 11, Ephesians 5, 1 Timothy 2, and so forth.

And the Apostle Paul looks back frequently to Genesis 2 and 3. And he guides the way we read the text of Genesis. That is what Bible-believing people allow themselves to do when they interpret the Scripture. Because it's all a unity.

We don't have various theologies in the Bible. We have a gospel. One message coming through.

Now, I'd like us to see five things from Genesis 2. First, God created the man first in verse 7, and then the woman in verse 22. Now, everybody knows that. This is nothing new I'm saying.

But what I just want to point out now in connection with what I said about the unity of the Bible is that in 1 Timothy 2, verse 13, Paul says that that's a significant point. He says here, Adam was formed first, then Eve. The order of creation itself teaches us that women, here's Paul's point in 1 Timothy 2, women should not hold the pastoral office in the church.

When he says a woman should not teach or have authority over a man in the church, he's talking about the pastoral office. The two primary responsibilities of any pastor are to teach, to declare God's Word, and to govern. To watch, to guard the flock.

Teaching and governance. He's talking about the pastoral office. Not whether or not a woman should teach a Bible study in the church, but the pastoral office.

And he reasons from the order of creation in Genesis 2 to the fact that it is qualified men only who should be considered for that position. Now, if you were to press me and ask me for the exact logic between the order of creation, first man, then the woman, and then why the pastoral office is restricted to qualified men only, what logical reasoning did Paul go through to move from that premise to that conclusion? Well, we could nuance that and argue that and think about that in various ways. And I'm not sure that's entirely clear to me.

But what is clear is that he made that move. And he's inspired. He understands something.

That's right. So there's no uncertainty about his conclusion. And that encourages us to affirm that our interpretive intuitions in Genesis 2 are not wrong, but right.

Because we have an apostle to encourage us. God has done something meaningful in creating the man first and then the woman. The egalitarians are wrong to play down the significance of the order of creation as they do, not infrequently in their writings.

In fact, they're wrong as sometimes they even want to turn it around the other way. And because the woman was created last here in Genesis 2, some would argue that that gives the woman a privileged position because in Genesis 1 there's a kind of ascending order of things as the creation narrative moves along. They import that into Genesis 2 and argue that case.

But that thinking is simply not apostolic and does not treat the Bible as a unity. One of the reasons why I care deeply about this important matter is not only that I'd like to understand who I am and my wife would like to understand who she is, but also because I am very reluctant to give away a plain reading of the Bible. If an interpretation has to overreach into very subtle hermeneutical moves to establish itself, that makes me nervous.

I am very reluctant as a pastor to take away from my people a plain reading of the Bible. That is not to say that the Bible is always easy to understand and all of its teachings are plain. But when it is plain, I'm not going to let that go.

And the unity of the Bible makes it plain in this case. Secondly, the woman was created for the man. Verse 18 says, and I'm reading the NIV, the Lord God said, it is not good for the man to be alone.

I will make a helper suitable for him. Now, the NIV has left out... Does anyone have another translation here? What? New American Standard? Would you read the second part of that verse from the New American Standard for us? Yes. I will make him a helper suitable for him.

There is a prepositional phrase in the Hebrew text that is invisible in the NIV, but visible in the more literal New American Standard. I will make for him a helper suitable for him. And Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 11, verse 9, that that is significant.

He says, neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. That fact, Genesis 2.18, I will make for him a helper suitable for him, is significant for how the Corinthian church in the first century AD is to conduct itself. Man and woman were not created for one another in an undifferentiated way.

Paul says what Genesis 2 in effect says, neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. I don't know how he could have put it more plainly. Third point.

And again, I'm arguing the unity of the Bible here. Let's allow one passage to interpret another. Third point.

Woman was also made from the man, verses 21 and 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 closed up the place with flesh.

Then the Lord God literally built a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. In 1 Corinthians 11, Paul marshals that fact to support his point that woman is the glory of man, as man is the image and glory of God. The fact that she was made from the man.

So let Scripture interpret Scripture. Fourth point. Genesis 2 argues woman's equality with man.

When God describes her as a helper fit for him or suitable for him, there in verse 18. And she alone, she out of all the other creatures, is able to complement the man because she is his equal and partner. She is uniquely compatible with the man.

But at the same time, she is his helper. She is a helper fit for him. He is not her helper.

Nor did God create them to help one another in all the same ways. The woman was created to help the man in a way that only a woman can. And when egalitarians protest that the word helper is used elsewhere in the Old Testament of God himself, which it is.

And therefore, in their argument, the word helper cannot describe someone in a supportive role. That is simply poor reasoning. A helper by definition supports and assists.

That's what the word helper means. For example, don't turn to it, but the parallelism in Psalm 20 verse 2. May he send you help from the sanctuary. There is the A line.

The B line is, and may he grant you support from Zion. In other words, in this Hebrew parallelism, the B line disambiguates the A line. The B line clarifies the A line.

So, may he send you help from the sanctuary. What does that mean? It means, may he grant you support from Zion. We see this very beautifully when Jesus was with his disciples the night he was betrayed in the upper room.

And he bent down and he washed his disciples' feet there in the upper room he undertook to help and support them. And when he took up the towel of the servant, he remained their leader. When he was bending down in front of them washing their dirty feet, was there any doubt in anybody's mind as to who their leader was? It is not, therefore, demeaning for God that he as our helper would take on a supportive and assisting role while remaining fully God in his essence and person and value.

The egalitarian argument simply lacks force. As the unique helper fit for man, the woman supports in her role while remaining man's equal partner in her standing before God. Thank you so much.

How thoughtful of you. Fifth point. And I only saw this some time ago.

This blew my mind when I discovered this one day. Genesis 2, 23 and 24. 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. For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and they will become one flesh. Now that is, other than Ephesians 5, this really is the key verse on marriage.

Genesis 2, 23 and 24. These key verses. Because the first woman was literally, literally from the flesh of the first man, he joyfully and intuitively recognizes her equality with him in verse 23.

Bone of my bones. Flesh of my flesh. Unlike all those animals.

He's not threatened by her at all. He feels privileged to have her. Because the first woman was literally from the flesh of the first man.

And therefore their union in marriage was a reunion. And therefore their relationship is one flesh. This is a very important phrase.

Each word bears emphasis. One flesh. That is, in two words, that's the meaning of marriage.

One flesh. Let's look at the first of the two words. One flesh means there are no barriers.

There's no distance. All of life is shared together. I no longer think in terms of me.

I now think in terms of us. That is perhaps the greatest transition psychologically, emotionally, we have to make when we enter into this mystery of marriage. But then there's this other word.

One flesh. And that's more than sex. It is not less, but it is more.

The word flesh suggests one mortal life fully shared. You won't be married in heaven. It's an earthly, mortal relationship.

It's not ultimate. If you look at Psalm 78, 39, that verse calls flesh a passing breeze. But it is still profound.

Think of a man and a woman standing inside a circle. And that circle is called one flesh. Life inside that circle is one flesh.

That circle surrounding them is a morally impenetrable barrier. It's penetrable, but not morally penetrable. You can break out.

That's called adultery. Or your parents-in-law can break in. That's called invasion, intrusion.

But it is a morally impenetrable barrier surrounding that man and that woman alone for their whole married life. There are no barriers between that man and that woman. So when I got married, December 18, 1971, the fact is I was totally broke.

I don't know why my father-in-law allowed me the privilege of marrying that woman. He had mercy on me. But if I had been a millionaire, the day we got married, it would have been hers as much as mine.

So when these super-rich people have his lawyers get together with her lawyers in advance and work out some sort of arrangement in case it doesn't work out, that is not marriage. That's having a wedding ceremony and then moving in together. A marriage is one mortal life fully shared.

And there is a morally impenetrable barrier surrounding those people and there are no barriers between them. That's why sex is a part of marriage and marriage only. Now, a successful marriage makes life together inside that circle into a garden.

A failed marriage allows life inside that circle to become a prison. But the total openness and vulnerability and sharing of the one flesh union makes sex meaningful within marriage. Sexual union symbolizes, celebrates, seals and refreshes the one flesh union.

Now, pardon the inadequacy of my illustration, but when you go down to the car dealership and you buy a car and you haggle over the price, you finally agree with the salesman on a price, customarily without perhaps even thinking of it, when you finally agree on it, you stick out your hand and you shake hands, right? Okay, that act symbolizes the sealing of the agreement. Forgive me if I say, sex is the ultimate handshake. It seals the agreement, the covenant.

But in the remarkable goodness of God, a man and woman in marriage do not have sex just once. They do this repeatedly. And in the great mercy of God, it is filled with delight.

But God didn't have to do it that way. He could have arranged marriage and the human body in such a way that it was sealed and consummated one time and one felt nothing. Physically, emotionally, it was not unlike a handshake.

God did not do that. In His great goodness, it refreshes and makes life inside one of the things that makes life inside that circle a garden rather than a prison. Now, Genesis 2 doesn't teach this, but the whole Scripture breathes with it that the other dynamic that makes life sweet is the presence of God.

But that's not my responsibility right now. We'll talk about that another time. The circle of one fleshness... Let's look at verse 24 again.

Verse 24 draws our attention because it's what I call a freeze-frame verse. Genesis 2 is describing life before the fall. But verse 24 stands out because here Moses stops and turns to us and addresses us post-fall people.

We're watching this video with him here in chapter 2. And we see God create the man and put him in the garden. We see God lead the animals by him. He's naming the animals.

We see God put him into a deep sleep. We see God shaping the woman, bringing her to the man. The man uttering this cry of delight and relief at the appearance of the woman.

And then at that moment in the video, Moses has his hand on the remote in his hand. He hits... What do you call it? Pause! He hits pause. Thank you.

Okay, then he stops. He turns to us sitting next to him on the sofa. And in verse 24 he talks to us.

And he says, for this reason, because of what you've just been seeing in the video, for this reason, a man will leave his father and mother today in this post-fall world. See, Adam didn't have a father and mother. A man now will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and they will become one flesh.

That's the reason why we see this pattern universally in human societies of couples tending to pair off. That's where it came from. And that's why it's good.

And then he hits pause again and the thing continues in verse 25. Now, do you remember... Have you seen the film *It's a Wonderful Life*? Okay. There's James Stewart.

George Bailey, right? And he wants to get out of that two-bit town. He goes down to the department store and wants to buy a suitcase for his big round-the-world trip. And the man behind the counter hands him one.

And George Bailey says, oh, nope, nope, nope. I want a big one. And the frame freezes right there.

And then the senior angel talks to the junior angel Clarence. Angel second class, doesn't have his wings yet. More about George Bailey.

And George Bailey says, well, that's what's happening in verse 24. And after we hear this narrative about what's going on there, the thing continues. Now, what I want us to see is that not only does this tell us that the one-flesh union retains a remnant for us of our Edenic experience, but there's something far more significant here that I just saw a couple of years ago.

The words for this reason at the beginning of verse 24 link verse 24 with what happens previously. We have a premise. We have a link for this reason.

And we have a conclusion. Now, for this reason, those words are the link. The conclusion is the one-flesh union of marriage.

Now, in Genesis 2, what's the premise? We have a blank here we need to fill in. What premise is linked to the conclusion one-flesh union in marriage? Well, it's the fact that the woman came from the man's body, right? She was made literally from his ribs. For this reason, a man and wife become one flesh.

That's why marriage is called that way. Now, with that thought in mind, I ask you to turn to Ephesians 5. Ephesians chapter 5. And as you know, throughout this passage, Paul draws parallels between Christ and the church and a Christian husband and Christian wife. Let's just look at verses 29 and following.

After all, Paul says, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it just as Christ does the church, for we are members of his body. 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.

But I'm talking about Christ and the church. Paul has taken Genesis 2.24, and with his mental computer, he has cut and pasted that verse into a new context in Ephesians 5. We still have the link for this reason. We still have the conclusion, the one fleshness of marriage.

But now, in this passage, what's the premise? Is the premise in this passage in Ephesians 5 the fact that the woman was made out of the body of a man? What is the premise in Ephesians 5? It's right there in verse 30. We are members of his body. We are members of the body of Christ.

We are united with him. We are joined to him. We are married to him.

Premise. For this reason, a man, in human marriage, will leave his father and mother, cleave to his wife, and become one flesh with her. The premise has changed.

Christ's union with his church, his bride, is the reason, ultimately, why a man gets married and becomes one with his wife. The ultimate union is the reason for the earthly union. Paul is taking us beyond Genesis 2 and showing us the real reason for human marriage.

The real reason is a divine marriage. And that's what he says explicitly in verse 32. I'm talking about Christ and the church.

So, think of it this way. No, don't think of it this way. There's Paul.

He's in prison. He's writing this letter to the Ephesians. And he wants to teach them about Christian marriage.

And he's stumped. He needs an illustration to help them understand the beauty of Christian marriage. So, he's saying, need an illustration, need an illustration.

Oh, Christ and the church. It didn't happen that way. That is not the nature of his thinking.

Think instead, reverently, of God the Father in eternity past planning a bride for his son. And he says, I need an illustration, I need an illustration. Marriage.

Oh. Human marriage. Human marriage is not a mutant in human social evolution like democracy.

It's a good idea, but it's just a human idea. Marriage is a divine creation illustrating ultimacy. That's why it's important.

Even more than our own personal happiness is at stake. Human marriage is not the reality for which Christ and the church provide an illustration. Human marriage is the symbol, the little earthly model of the real marriage that belongs to eternity.

And when human history is all over and there is no more human marriage ever again, it will all come to an end forever. The marriage, capital M, will continue forever. And that is why Paul develops the Christ-husband-church-wife parallels in Ephesians 5. And here's my point.

When we look at the typological symmetry of the Bible's theology of marriage linking Genesis 2 with Ephesians 5, we see that marriage incarnates the gospel. I'm a preacher. I try hard to make the gospel clear.

But I do it not only in the pulpit. I do it in my marriage as well. I try to make the gospel clear.

A godly Ephesians 5 quality marriage is a little pinprick of light in the darkness of this present evil age just as much as a great sermon. It is a sermon. Therefore, any distortion of marriage, whether in our doctrine of it or in our practice of it, diminishes the clarity and mars the beauty of the gospel in human eyes.

Any interpretation which draws Christian people away from an Ephesians 5 type of marriage is at best the nicest thing I can say, the kindest thing I can say, is that it is unhelpful. That kind of interpretation is unhelpful in the church's ministry of the gospel. The egalitarian obscuring of human marriage is an unintended assault on the authority of Christ over his church by reducing the authority of a man in his home.

And it is an unwitting erosion of male responsibility to rise to the stature of Christ in the home. We'll have discussion in just a moment, but let me point out just a couple of things in Genesis chapter 3 now. Now, let's stop right now.

Let's stop. I just want to make sure that that point is clear. While that thought is sort of percolating in our minds, can I clarify what I was just saying? Would you like to explore that further anyway? Yes, ma'am.

Yes, ma'am. I said it is. The egalitarian obscuring of human marriage is an unintended... These are godly people.

It is an unintended assault on the authority of Christ over his church by reducing the authority of a man in his home. If a marriage is to be a projection of the gospel onto the screen of the human imagination, and if a man is disabled in his capacity to exercise Christ-like authority in his home, then that line of interpretation is an obscuring, unintended obscuring of the gospel. And the other sentence was, it is an unwitting... Again, because these are godly people.

An unwitting erosion of male responsibility to step up to the plate and rise to Christ-like dignity and stature. The challenge is reduced. The call is reduced.

If we don't see this as clearly as the gospel would have us see it. So there's a lot more at stake than just a discussion about male-female roles. Because of God's strategy for human marriage.

God's strategy is not to come in to this human creation of marriage and sort of regulate it and guide us in it. God's strategy is to create marriage as a living incarnation of ultimate reality. What are the strengths of the egalitarian interpretations in Genesis 2? There is much in egalitarian literature on Genesis 2 with which I agree.

At each point in which they see Genesis 2's affirmation of female equality with the man, I help her fit for him. From his very flesh and so forth. One flesh with him, unlike the animal.

At all of these points, I agree. We all agree. Those are strong arguments.

And I share those arguments with them. Those interpretations. What's frankly frustrating sometimes is they won't admit that I share those arguments with them.

They want to position me somewhere where I don't belong. It's called the fallacy of excluded middle. Here's my position right here, okay? And here's male domination over here.

And here is, on one side, and here is egalitarianism over on the other side. Well, my position is here in the middle. What they want to do in responding to me is they treat my position as if it were over there and ignore the nuances that are actually built into my interpretation and my understanding of God's Word at this point.

That's frustrating to me. It's at that point that I have to say I'm sorry. I have to keep saying what, saying clearly, as clearly as I can, saying as fairly as I can what I really believe.

Yes, sir? Well, that's a very honest and important question. Again, let me repeat it for the sake of the tape. How do we, who are complementarian, if I'm correct in understanding your question, how do we perhaps distort the beauty of the Gospel in the marriage relationship? Well, we do.

We all do. Last night I was looking at some things that an egalitarian colleague, former colleague, had written in response to things I'd written, and I was getting mad about it all over again. And then I just had to bring myself under the judgment of the Word of God and remind myself that his sins may be different from mine, but my sins are just as bad as his.

Before God, all had sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. We're all in the same trouble together. And I do see, in myself and in all of the complementarians, failure.

So you see, we really don't want to argue in an ad hominem kind of way, who has the better marriages? That's not an issue here. We are all under the judgment of the Word of God. The question is, what does the Bible teach? That's the issue.

And I think that some complementarians are so eager to preserve and protect and enhance and honor the truth of male headship and female support that the complementary truth of male-female equality is not borne out. It's not as visible. And sometimes we men are just plain overbearing.

And that's a tragedy as well. Yes, sir. Let me answer briefly the second question.

That is, how is the... Let's see if I can repeat your question. Let me rephrase your question if I may. You tell me if I've got it right.

Is the analog of human marriage entirely apt in describing the ultimate reality? The answer has to be no. No metaphor is fully adequate. Christ's absoluteness cannot be mirrored in a man, a husband, however godly.

So there's only partial overlap between the ultimate reality and the human analog. And we have to allow for that. That's for the first matter, the meaning of the word helper.

I appreciate the gentleman's understanding of the word, but I would not use that line of reasoning. The word *azer*, as a word, just means helper. What one does with that word in any given literary context is a separate question.

In other words, you take up your Hebrew lexicon, open it up to that word, and it says help or helper. That's the dictionary definition. But the fact that this helper is a counterpart to the man, that's not a function of the word helper itself.

That dynamic, that reality, that truth is a function of helper fit for him, embedded in this context with all the ways in which that meaning is congenial with the context. So it's just a matter of lexicographical method. There's a difference between the word and the reference to which the word points.

The word *azer*, as a word, just means helper, helper. The reference to which the word points, namely a life, a godly life, she is a helper complementary to and fitting with the man. Okay, one more point, and then we're going to look at Genesis 3. Yes.

Well, I didn't come prepared to make any sort of official pronouncement on this, and I'm not about to challenge Wayne Grudem on anything, I think. Well, on some things I might, but he's a Baptist. But it just seems to me that verse 21 of Ephesians 5 provides the rubric for the various relationships that are then described, husbands, wives, children, fathers, slaves, masters.

That in the relational atmosphere of mutual consideration, here's how we work it out, and then he gives us the specifics. So it looks to me as though his argument, as though in the argument, verse 21 leads into 5:22 through 6-9. That's right, and children and fathers and slaves and masters.

But I think what verse 21 wants to do there is remove the poisons of bitterness and unwholesome competition and faith-saving and manipulation and so forth. Remove all of those psychological and relational poisons from what can become very beautiful relationships in these various spheres of life. So there's just an atmosphere of mutual consideration and deference and care and attention and respect and so forth.

We want to send those signals to everybody that we're meek and we're ready to yield to each other and make each other happy in any way we can. My dear wife has taught me in relation to our children, when they come and ask for something, if there's any possible way we can say yes, then say yes. Now, I didn't look at it that way naturally.

You know, I was keeping score and working out equations and trying to keep things balanced in some sort of way, and her attitude was, if we can say yes, why not say yes? Now, that is a very sweet, godly kind of atmosphere to create in a home. Everybody relaxes. We know it's going to be okay.

Let's look at chapter 3 for just a moment, okay? And let's look first at verse 17. God said to Adam, because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, you must not eat of it. Curse it as the ground because of you.

Through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. Several years ago, I went down to Wheaton College when I lived in the Chicago area to hear John Piper and Ruth Tucker debate these matters, and I was stunned to hear my own name referred to by Ruth Tucker in the course of that debate. She represented me as having a belief that I don't hold at all, namely that Adam sinned before the fall.

She was saying that that's what I think, that Adam sinned before the fall when he abandoned his post as head during the temptation and deception earlier in this chapter. Well, I think the idea that Adam sinned before the fall is an absurdity that was just being attached to me. Interestingly, she did not nuance her presentation before the students there by mentioning that when I proposed, I did propose that Adam abandoned his post as head.

I did say that. But she did not observe that I was reasoning that way out of verse 17, a very careful reading of verse 17. God gives, in verse 17, two reasons for the cursing of the ground.

He does not say what we expect him to say in verse 17. Having read chapters 2 and 3 up to this point, we expect God to say, because you ate from the tree about which I commanded you, you must not eat of it, curse it as a ground, and so forth. Isn't that what we expect? That's not what God says.

God inloads another prior reason for the cursing of the ground, because you listened to the voice of your wife. And the really interesting thing is that back in verse 6, there is no record of any conversation between them. Look at what verse 6 says.

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were open, and so forth.

There's no conversation recorded there, but God says you listened to the voice of your wife. What does God mean by this? To listen to the voice of his wife means to yield submission to her, to obey her. He conceded headship to her.

Do you see, for example, in this chapter, how God approaches the woman, not the man? And rather than faithfully reject the serpent's insinuations, she tries to match wits with him and argue on his premises, and that was doomed. And then in verse 13, she admits to being deceived. In approaching the woman, the serpent addresses both the woman and the man.

The pronoun you, in verses 1, 4, and 5, when the serpent says, did God really say, you must not eat from any tree in the garden. And also in verses 4 and 5, that's a plural you in the Hebrew text. And that approach draws her into speaking both for herself and for her husband.

Do you see in verse 2, she says, the woman said to the serpent, we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, and so forth. She speaks for them both. And as this deception unfolds, and the serpent draws her into a perception, not only of the tree, but of herself and her husband, that is skewed to begin with, and calculated to be useful to his purposes, the serpent's purposes, where is Adam? Well, it would appear from verse 6 that he's standing by doing nothing, because it says there, she gave some to her husband who was with her.

It's not absolutely clear, but it's the only indication we have of where Adam is in this picture, and he is there with her. So, in one compound event, coming back to verse 17 now, the first part of verse 17, in one compound event, two related dynamics are at work. Obviously, disobeying the reveal, will, and command of God by eating the forbidden fruit.

That's what we expect. But there's something else. Also, upsetting the meaning and order of the husband-wife union.

And God identifies both components as warrants for the curse upon the ground. Both, together, acted to bring us down from bliss to misery. This is the fall.

And in 1 Timothy chapter 2, verse 14, Paul says, Adam was not the one deceived, it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. Now, when he says that, his point is not that women are more gullible than men. In some ways, women are more sensitive and alert than men.

The Bible nowhere teaches inferior moral character or nature in women. Moreover, Paul is concerned in this context, not with the nature of women in abstract, but with man and woman in relation to each other in

the church. How does the church get on together? He is simply noting the fact that at the fall, the tempter led Eve away from learning God's command from her husband in what he calls in verse 11, quietness and full submission.

And instead, the woman stepped forward, and Adam allowed her to, she stepped forward to teach and exercise authority over Adam, to use Paul's categories in verse 12, here in verse 22. And as a result, their harmony disintegrated into tension, alienation, recrimination, and shame. And Paul sees the same danger in the church.

In the church, as well as in the home, we must discover the glory of manhood and womanhood, and let us not be so timid that we are stampeded by fashionable hysteria into losing that privilege. That's what happened in Genesis 3. It was the danger in Ephesus in 1 Timothy 2, and it's the danger today. So Paul in 1 Timothy 2, in commenting on what's happening in Genesis 3, I don't believe he's making any pronouncement about womanly nature, although some would argue that point.

I'm not persuaded of that. I think he is just looking, that's a too sort of philosophical reading of the text. He's just looking at what happened.

And he's saying, the woman did not learn in quietness and submission, but she taught and exercised authority over her husband. And do we want to continue that same sort of trouble, he's saying to the church in Ephesus. Now, your eyes are beginning to glaze over.

So, I want to ask you to let me say one more thing, okay, from Genesis chapter 3, and then we'll open it up for further discussion for just a few minutes. The word desire in Genesis 3.16. This is another flashpoint of interpretation. To the woman God said, I will greatly increase your pains and childbearing.

With pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you. Now, again, this is the point at which sometimes I find myself a bit frustrated.

I would agree with egalitarians, that here, to use Paul's language from Romans 1, God gives her up. God gives her over to this tragic relationship now, this struggle in her marriage. Desire for her husband, and his being, his ruling over her.

That is to say, her own controlling impulse being matched by his lordly ego. That is male domination. Male headship is clearly taught in Genesis chapter 2 as the New Testament affirms.

But male domination truly is a distortion of God's beautiful design, and why I'm frustrated sometimes is that the egalitarians would sort of overlook complementarians who agree with them as to the evil of male domination, and see it truly as a part of the fall, as a consequence of the fall. But they would rather position us elsewhere. Well, I have some more things here, but I'm going to stop right now because our time is almost gone, and I have wearied you sufficiently.

So let's open it up for further discussion, further reading. Okay, you know, I have found, I have been greatly helped by reading egalitarian authors because they make me struggle harder, and think more clearly. They push me.

And I have to ask myself, why does this interpretation bother me? Why is this unconvincing? What's wrong with this? And when I read my complementarian friends, I find a lot of affirmation of what I already think, but when I read those who disagree with me, that pushes me to take the next step in my understanding. I

mentioned earlier Stanley Grenz's book, *Women in the Church*, Ruth Tucker's book, *Women in the Maze*. They both respond to recovering biblical manhood and womanhood, and I think both reveal what is for me personally just sort of a frustrating inability really to come to grips with what we're seeing there, but in reading them, it's so good for me to be pushed.

That's a great point. Thank you. Yes, sir.

Yep, that's right. Thank you for pushing me on that. Let me clarify.

When Eve began to weaken in her dialogue with the serpent, was she walking in integrity? I don't think so. When Adam was watching that happen without decisive intervention, was he walking in integrity? I don't think so. But in chapter 2, God's legal requirement was not that they have perfect thoughts and trust Him completely at all moments.

God's legal requirement was that they not eat from that tree. That was the law. The test of faith was the eating of the tree, not having perfect godly reasoning and lines of argument going on in their minds and perfect psychology.

So, in one sense, sin began to unfold at the beginning of the chapter, but their eyes weren't opened until they both ate from the fruit, you see, because that was God's legal requirement. Now, what God is pointing out in verse 17 is the complexity. He is allowing for the complexity of what led to the eating of the forbidden fruit.

Namely, he listened to the voice of his wife. But it's not as though there is sin before the fall. It's all one complex tragedy, one compound.

So, they're just sort of free-falling from one mistaken judgment and perception to the next until they actually commit that which was legally imposed upon them, they violate what was legally imposed upon them, namely, the eating of the forbidden fruit. So, technically, legally, they didn't sin until they ate the fruit. But in their inner beings, they were tumbling from the first moment of that deception.

But it didn't become legal until they ate from the fruit. Well, my point simply is that in chapter 2, God's command and expectation and requirement were that they not eat from the fruit of that tree. Eve even adds to it and says, we can't touch it.

Why does she say that? Because now she's beginning, presumably, this is my hunch, she's beginning to see God's unfairness in that restriction. I can't even touch it, much less eat it. The restriction is magnifying in her mind.

She's beginning to have dark thoughts of God instead of rejoicing in his benevolence. That's called unbelief, lack of faith. But God did not say, I want you to trust me.

God said, you may not eat of that tree. Now, it was an act of a lack of faith, but they hadn't formally broken God's law until they ate from the forbidden tree. We have time for... No, we don't have time for even one more comment.

Our time is gone. Thank you. God bless you, everyone.

God bless you.

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