**Marriage: In the beginning…**

***God’s original plan for the institution as told in Genesis 1-2***

**Introduction**

As God created the world, everything He created was good and for a purpose. He filled the earth with animal and plant life providing everything needed in order to live. As Genesis 1 closes, God creates humanity in His image (Gen 1:26). He then establishes marriage in Genesis 2:18-25. Certainly, a lot has changed since sin and death entered the world, but Jesus appeals to the creation account when He discusses marriage and divorce (Mt 19:3-12; Mk 10:1-12). What truths are contained in the creation account about marriage which can assist our marriages today?

**1. God Created them Male and Female**

While a majority of our time will be spent in Genesis 1-2, I want to start with Matthew 19:3-12. Let’s examine the text together. The Pharisees are seeking to test Jesus (Mt 19:3) and they ask him about divorce. Jesus responds by talking about marriage (Mt 19:4-6). That is not what the Pharisees want to talk about, so they try to steer the conversation back to divorce (Mt 19:7-9). Jesus is telling us that if we understand God’s intention for marriage then the question of can we get divorced any time we want. ***Jesus tells us the creation account answers the question of divorce (Mt 19:4; have you not read?).***

Most of the time when we talk about marriage, we start with Genesis 2:18-25, but Jesus starts with Genesis 1:27. God created them male and female. Both man and woman are created in the image of God (Gen 1:27; see also 5:1-2). God created us as male and female… on purpose. We realize that men and women are different and that is often a point of complaint for us. Wives wonder why their husbands do certain things and act certain ways and husbands wonder the same thing about their wives. We often think differently, approach situations differently, and process things differently. Many have exaggerated the differences with phrases like, “Men are from Mars and women are from Venus.” While I think sometimes, we our difference out of proportion, but sometimes we might feel like our mate is on or from a different planet!

Consider this: ***God made us different from each other on purpose.*** This is not an “opposites attract” idea but the idea that God created us in a way that will provide us with different viewpoint.

* Abigal and David (1 Sam 25)
* Job and his wife (Job 2:9-10)

**2. Marriage address humanity’s first problem: loneliness**

The point is often made that while God says his creation is good six times in Genesis 1 (1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 31) but for the first time in 2:18 we are told something is not good. The first problem that humanity faces is loneliness. God had provided the man with a garden, given him food, and instructed him on his tasks (2:15-17). But it is not good for him to be alone.

Warning: This is not an attempt to say get married so you don’t get lonely or bored. Nor is this a statement that you have to get married. Jesus and Paul both present the option of living righteously while single. But even single people are not made to live alone but we have a need for companionship.

We were made for companionship! We are not meant to be solo people living with the animals. We might say something like, “A dog is a man’s best friend” but notice in 2:20 all the animals of the field were not suitable companions for the man. Woman is created and the man realizes that she is a suitable companion for him! Marriage answers a basic need we have to go through life with a consistent person by our side. Friends are great but they often flash in and out of our lives for only short periods of time, but marriage provides that long term companionship we can count on.

The first problem humanity faces it is God not man who notice the issue. God notices what we need and takes the initiative to make sure we have everything we need. In many ways this is the story of the Bible! God acts when we are not even aware of the problem! This is a powerful picture of God who provides for our needs now and takes the initiative to give us a path to eternity with Him.

**3. Marriage is missional**

God creates the garden of Eden and places Adam in the garden (2:8, 15). God gives Adam a job and instructions (2:15-17).

2:15: Adam’s Job

All that is included in the task is difficult to say but a few things should be noted.

* Cultivate it

The “cultivate” or “serve” is often used to describe worshiping the Lord (Ex 7:16; 8:1).[[1]](#footnote-1)

* Keep it (Guard it; same Hebrew word used in Gen 3:24 when cherubim guard tree of life)

The word “keep” can mean to guard. It is the same Hebrew word used in Gen 3:24 when cherubim guard tree of life. Thus, the first man would have had certain duties in the garden but one of those duties was to guard it from being invaded by evil.

2:18: Not good to be alone

The woman is to be a helper to the man. The man and the woman are to work together to worship God and prevent evil from invading the garden and their lives. Sadly, Adam and Eve fail at this.

Married couples we are on a mission. This is not a solo mission. We realize that in marriage we are better together than we are separately. We must fight to stop satan from getting a foothold in our lives and toward honoring God in our marriage. The ultimate goal of marriage to help each other reflect the image of God and to enjoy Him for eternity.

**4. Marriage was to bring joy, not misery**

* Genesis 2:23-25

Marriage is not a human institution but a divine creation. Man and woman are made in the image of God. Marriage deals with a problem of loneliness. God says the woman is a helper suitable for the man. While the word “good” is not used to describe marriage, I certainly think the idea is there. God views marriage as a good thing.

In our broken world, I certainly understand that there are a lot of painful marriage stories. I know people whose parents got divorced and the toll that took on them as the child. I have known horror stories of mates being unfaithful and leaving their spouse almost overnight. I have seen the pain of blended families (two divorced people marry with children from other marriages). I realize in the fallen world that we live in we have pain in these relationships. But marriage was not meant to cause pain but joy. While ultimate happiness is not found in a relationship our marriages should be joyful.

Notice the joy that Adam has when he meets Eve. His wife cost him a rib (I am not trying to be funny with that) but he was overjoyed that he had a helper and companion! ***The first poetry in the Bible is when Adam attempts to describe seeing Eve for the first time!***

* Eccl 9:9: Life hold a lot of monotony and activities that are necessary but not enjoyable!
* Prov 19:14: Wife is blessing from the Lord

**5. Marriage must be a priority**

* Genesis 2:24

The most important relationship you have in this life is with the Lord. The most important relationship you have with another human is the one you have in marriage. Marriage begins when a husband and wife leave behind all other relationships in order to establish a relationship between one another. There is no human relationship that is more important or deserves more of our focus than our marriage.

God calls us repeatedly to honor our father and mother. This is the fifth commandment (Ex 20:12; Dt 5:16). Paul says the command to honor your father and mother is the first commandment connected to a reward for obedience (Eph 6:1-3). As highly as God values our respect for our parents and wants us to honor them, our relationship to our spouse must be the priority over any earthly relationship. Stupid disclaimer: This does not mean that you cannot have friends or go out with friends, but it does mean that going out and spending time with friends does not take priority over your mate.

God did not intend for our marriage to be just one of many relationships that we have. God intended marriage to be the main relationship that you have and the one that receives the most focus and attention.

**6. Marriage requires becoming ONE**

* Genesis 2:24
* Matthew 19:6

Marriage is an inseparable joining of husband and wife throughout their lifetime. Because the bond is created by God. The bond is not created by common interest nor by a sexual relationship but it is created by God.

Sometimes couples say, “They were the only one for me.” That might be true, but I know that God bound you together in marriage. God does not suggest married couples become ONE nor does He portray it as the ideal but requires that we be ONE. This is the way that He created marriage to work!

Proverbs 2:16-17: The adulterous woman forgets the covenant of her God.

The ONEness of you and your mate will be tested. Some of those tests might have subsided if you are older or they might have become more intense.

When sin entered the world what is the first thing the man does… blames the woman (Gen 3:12). Our ONEness is going to be attacked!

Ironic statement: To be ONE requires work on the part of the man and woman.

**7. Physical union without shame**

* Genesis 2:25

We live in a world that calls us to engage in any type of sexual activity as long as it is between two consenting adults. Then we have movements (Me too) that discuss regret because they “consented” but they did not feel like the had any choice but to “consent.”

We have people that live wildly and then come to regret it. The stories are all over the place. On woman who was not religious said she lived a wild life and now she wants her daughter to avoid the emptiness she felt. Even those who are not religious realize how immoral lifestyle is disappointing.

Proverbs 6:32: Lacking sense to commit adultery

Everything is good in its place (Eccl. 3:1-11)

In marriage you can enjoy a sexual relationship without shame. The Bible realizes the power of sexuality and outside of its right context it will destroy you. It is interesting that we have spent so much time demonizing the Biblical teaching of sexuality and then we are surprised when rejecting it is harmful.

1. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)