

Marriage

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[0:00] Moses writes, beginning in chapter 2, verse 18, Then the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a helper fit for him.

Now out of the ground the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name.

The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man.

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

Then the man said, This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman because she was taken out of man.

[1:03] Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

Help us now, Father, by your Spirit. Help us to understand and treasure your word. We ask in Christ's name. Amen.

You guys take a seat. I am what you might call a part-time halfway handyman at my house.

Which basically means this. That I take on projects that are usually a little bit too big for me and I get them about halfway done. And the half that I do is usually halfway decent.

It's okay. It's passable. But then there's always a little bit left. A little something that I haven't done. And there's always, you know, if I'm building something, there's always something that's a little bit off.

[2:05] So, for instance, we have this... I don't even know what to call it. It's not an entertainment center and yet it sits right there with our TV right above it in our bedroom. And it's got a couple of doors on it where you can put things.

But then on the sides there are these just blank spaces where I intended to put either more doors or some drawers or something and I just never quite got around to it. And if you examine it closely or if you examine, say, the headboard that I made because I'm always trying to make furniture.

If you examine things too closely you'll start to see angles that just aren't quite right. Little things that don't quite match up. Nothing is really all that symmetrical. That's why I like to make things intentionally give them an old antique-y look because then I don't have to be all that accurate.

A part of the problem, I'm convinced of this. Allie's not quite convinced of this. But I'm convinced that a part of the problem is I just don't have all the right tools. If I could just invest a little bit more money in the tools that the guy on PBS has.

If I could have those tools I could make the most beautiful furniture ever known to man. Or at least something that's a little bit more passable and I wouldn't have to be a halfway handyman around my house anymore.

[3:14] I mean there are all sorts of gadgets and jigs and saws and cool things that I've seen on TV and I know they exist and I've seen some of them in stores and I want to get my hands on them and I just want the opportunity to use these really cool tools.

Because what I end up doing is I use the tools that I happen to have at hand. And when I say what I have at hand sometimes I mean that really literally. Sometimes I'm in the middle of a project and I just don't want to move from what I'm doing and so whatever tool is closest to me that looks like it'll do the job is what I grab.

So I've used wrenches, I've used screwdrivers, I've used pliers, I've used all of the above and several other things in place of a hammer. Because my hammer's across the room and this'll do, right?

I mean I'm constantly using the wrong thing for the wrong job and getting things wrong. And I think that in terms of looking out across our culture and how we understand how life works and how we understand, we see in this passage the creation of woman and the institution of marriage.

And sometimes we look in our culture and what's happening oftentimes is we know what God has made, we know what God has created and yet we're not using the things that He's made for the purposes for which He made them.

[4:39] We're doing things that He did not intend for us to do with good gifts that He's given to us. There's nothing wrong with any of the tools that I have, but my wrench just doesn't work very well as a hammer.

It just doesn't work as well. It works fine as a wrench, doesn't work well as a hammer. And in Genesis chapter 2, particularly in this second half, we're seeing the creation of a distinct gender separate from man.

We're seeing the creation of marriage. And these things are good gifts that God has given to us and yet we don't often see them as good gifts because we misuse them.

Because we want to force them to fit into a mold that they weren't designed to fit into. And so what I want us to do is as we walk through this passage this morning, I want us to try to understand why God has designed things the way that He has, why He has set them up this way, and what His purposes are in doing things this way.

You can see that this whole idea of doing things with a purpose is at the forefront of the passage just by looking at the first verse that we read. Because verse 18 jumps out at you if you've been reading from chapter 1, verse 1 on through here.

[5:55] So take a look at verse 18. We're told that then the Lord God said, it is not good that the man should be alone. Now when you're reading that in the original language, you're reading along and you're told that the Lord God said, not good.

And that just sort of stands out if you've been reading through the book because up to this point, over and over and over, God has declared things to be good. I mean, on every day of creation, He said, He looked and He saw that it was good.

And then on day 6, after He had created man, He looks and He sees that it's very good. And now here we are in chapter 2, back on day 6 again, because Moses has sort of rewind the tape and then zoomed us in on the picture to give us a more detailed account of the creation of male and female in the image of God that He describes in chapter 1 in just a couple of verses.

He's giving us more detail on that here in chapter 2. And so it's a bit surprising to have these two words, not good, thrown into the midst of a story in which we keep hearing the declaration, it's good, it's good, it's good, it's good, it's very good.

It sort of stands out to you. And this is before sin has entered into the world. The fall doesn't happen until chapter 3. Which means that when God looks at something and He declares it not good, there's something important happening here.

[7:24] God has, I've often said that God originally created Adam to be deficient by design. Something is missing from the man.

Something is missing from Adam. That's not an accident. That's not a product of the fall. This is all a part of what God is intending for the man, for the people that He's making in His image.

It's not good, He says, for this man to be alone. In other words, men are not intended to exist as men in isolation all by themselves.

Adam needed Eve. And for the most part, men need women in their lives and in the world. We need them.

We can't do all the things that God has told us to do apart from both sexes. We need both genders in order to accomplish God's purposes for us. I mean, you can see that pretty clearly.

[8:29] All you have to do is back up to chapter 1, where God gives what's often called the cultural mandate, where He tells the man and the woman, tells Adam and Eve there in chapter 1, that they're to have dominion over the whole created realm, and that they are to be fruitful and multiply.

Well, how can Adam be fruitful and multiply all by himself? He can't. It's impossible. So just on that sort of level, just on the simple level of fulfilling God's command to spread out across the earth and exercise dominion through procreation all over the land, all over the earth, just looking at that level, the most basic purpose that God has given to us in Genesis chapter 1 that cannot be accomplished by a man by himself, and it cannot be accomplished by a woman by herself.

We need one another, which is exactly what God is communicating to us when He describes this second person that He's going to create.

Of course, in the first 17 verses of chapter 2, we get the detailed account of the creation of the first man, and now He says that it's not good for that man to be alone, and He says, I will make him a, and there's two words that we need to key in here on.

It says, a helper fit for him. So two words. What does it mean to create a helper, and what does it mean for this helper to be fit for the man?

[9:57] What does that mean? Well, first of all, one of the things that we have to recognize about the word helper, and there's really two things that I want us to see about the man and the woman from these statements, but the first thing that we see here that we need to recognize is that the word helper does not, as we might think, as we just kind of commonly use the word in English, it does not imply any sort of inferiority on the part of the woman that God's going to create.

It doesn't imply that she's secondary in any sort of way, because many times this word is actually used throughout the Old Testament to describe God Himself. So God is the helper of Israel.

Well, in that instance, in that particular instance, who is the stronger one? Is God, by being Israel's helper, automatically considered inferior to Israel? No. God is Israel's helper in that He does things that Israel alone cannot do.

Israel cannot save herself. Israel cannot deliver herself. Israel cannot live obedient, godly lives among its people. They can't do it unless God Himself comes alongside them as their helper.

Well, in the same way, there are things that man by himself cannot do, and so God creates a helper. Not an inferior, but someone who can help Adam to accomplish things that he cannot do on his own.

[11:22] And that idea is fleshed out a little bit more in the other term, which is translated here in the ESV as fit for Him. It really means, literally it means someone who corresponds to or someone who is face to face with or with Him.

So it's, the idea being communicated here is that the woman that God's going to create, in all the ways that Adam is lacking, she supplies.

In all the ways that she is lacking, He supplies. It's corresponding. They correspond to one another so that on their own they're both lacking something.

On their own they're insufficient to get the job done. But together, they each bring things to the table that the other is missing and lacks, and together they're able to accomplish the purposes for which God created them.

So we're not here to think of Eve as somehow less than Adam or inferior to Adam. In order we to think of Adam as sort of just sort of bumbling and unable to get anything done without Eve, both of them by themselves are inadequate.

[12:30] They need one another. It's not good for the man to be alone. And part of the reason for that is because they're both created in the image of God. They're both, they're both equally valuable and worthy before God.

They both possess the image of God. Because God says in chapter 1 He created them in His image, male and female He created them. So it's not that Adam possesses the image of God and Eve does not or vice versa.

They both fully possess the image of God. They're both equal in that sense and yet they're very different from one another. They're very different from one another.

They are equal in value and worth and yet they will in this life have different roles that they are to perform with regards to one another.

That's the reality. That's the way that it is. And if there's anything that for the last 40 years a large segment of our culture has tried to deny it's this fundamental distinction and difference and role between men and women.

[13:36] There's no doubt about that. The feminist movement has been trying since the early 60s to erase in our minds all concepts of real fundamental differences between men and women.

Trying to erase it completely and despite all of the efforts to ignore those differences they remain. I mean there would be no beef with feminism if it were simply about securing certain rights for women that were lacking in the past like the right to vote.

That needs to there's no reason for women not to be able to vote and other things that are related to that but that's one of the things we've got to recognize about feminism is that its aim is not to secure rights for women.

The aim of the feminist movement is to erase distinctions between male and female and yet just recently the US military the army has had to change their requirements their physical requirements for women who are wanting to enter into combat.

They changed them not long ago because they were trying to equalize things between the men and the women. They were trying to make some of the entrance requirements the physical feats that they had to accomplish they were trying to make those a little bit more on par with one another and so they changed the requirements for the female soldiers.

[15:00] One of the requirements now currently is that female soldiers wanting to go into combat or certain other positions as well they have to be able to perform at least three pull-ups.

I could do three pull-ups I think when I was ten and so it doesn't sound too difficult but hey you've got to start somewhere. So they started at this base level three pull-ups because the men had to do pull-ups now the men had to do more pull-ups than that but they wanted to have some of the same things and so they required three pull-ups.

Here's the problem when they did the initial testing to assess whether or not the test is good less than 50% of their female soldiers could do three pull-ups.

Why? Because they're built differently than men. Whatever your view on women in combat that's another issue altogether.

Set that aside. The simple fact of the matter is men and women are very different from one another and it doesn't matter how much you try to ignore it. It doesn't matter how often you try to point to an example of someone that you know.

[16:08] Maybe you know a man who's very feminine or a woman who's very masculine and you try to point out those to say you see the differences are not really there but really the exception proves the rule because in almost every couple that I know the man is the stronger one and in every single couple that I know only the wife is able to have children.

Strange thing right? Unless you're Arnold Schwarzenegger in a bad mid-90s movie and you're a man you cannot have children. There are just fundamental differences between us and they're not simply biological.

They go beyond that. We think differently. We react to things differently. We are different from one another and in the face of a culture that wants to erase those differences and wants to mix up the pairings.

Pairing men with men or women with women and all sorts of other multiple combinations of things. We are reminded by God's word that it's not an incredibly complicated matter.

It's pretty simple. God made us male and female. It wasn't good to just have a man. You need to have a woman who corresponds to him and is different from him in ways that will enable the two of them together to fulfill God's purposes for them.

[17:29] That's not a complicated subject. Now I'll admit that it is complicated by the entrance of sin into the world. There's no doubt about that. That complicates the matter.

In fact, if you look over in chapter 3, take a look, I just want you to look over there in chapter 3 where God is addressing after the fall has taken place, so now sin has entered into the world and God begins to address first the serpent, he's speaking judgment upon them, he's going to speak to the serpent and then he's going to speak to the woman, he's going to speak to Eve in verse 16 and listen to what God says to her.

To the woman he said, now notice how this is specifically directed at her as a woman, I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing, in pain you shall bring forth children.

So there it is. Okay, there's one judgment falling upon Eve and the rest of women who would follow after her that applies distinctly to her gender. Here's another one.

Your desire shall be for your husband and he shall rule over you. What's the point of that? The point of that is that now there will be tension between the sexes, that there will be relational difficulties, that there will be a desire on the part of both to be in charge and in control and that will not work.

[18:51] So I recognize the entrance of sin into the world has in some ways complicated things between men and women. Indeed, the entrance of sin into the world has affected not just relationships but has affected every part of humanity, all of us.

So that there are people who are born with physical deformities or physical incapacities or strange mixtures of physical attributes that some would point to to say, see, it's not as simple as Genesis 2 points out.

It's not simply male, but the reality is that all of those things are the product of sin. And even in a fallen sinful world, we can go back to Genesis chapters 1 and 2 and discern God's original creative purposes and we can begin to apply those things even in a fallen world.

And God's original creative purposes partially consist of two distinct genders, male and female, with distinct roles.

roles. Let's talk a little bit about those roles and how they differ from one another. If you read Genesis through the eyes of an Israelite or Jew in Moses' day, then it's much more clear than it may be to you and I as we read through here.

[20:08] But one of the things that you begin to see is that there's clearly laid out in chapter 2 a headship submission or an authority submission relationship between the man and the woman.

Let me show you what I mean. Immediately after God declares that it's not good for the man to be alone, that he's going to create Eve, he's going to create a woman who's suitable for him, then there's almost an interruption in the story it seems like.

All of a sudden God does something different. He says, I'm going to make a helper, and then he does something completely differently. Look at verse 19. Now out of the ground the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens, and he brought them to the man to see what he would call them.

Suddenly now, God began by saying, I'm going to create a helper fit for Adam, and then all of a sudden we're dealing with animals again. And God is parading these animals before Adam.

And then it goes on, in the middle of verse 19. It says, Whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all livestock, and to the birds of the heavens, and to every beast of the field.

[21:21] Strange, isn't it? What's happening here? Well, two things are happening here. On one level, Adam is simply obeying the command of chapter one.

He's exercising dominion over the animals. Because in the ancient world, to name something was to demonstrate your authority over it.

If you gave something or someone a name, then you had authority over that someone or something. It was just common. Everybody kind of understood that. So if you're a Jew reading this, you're going, okay, Adam's doing what Adam's supposed to do.

He's naming the animals because he has authority over the animals. Nothing strange there. But the other thing that's happening here is God is, through this process, showing Adam his need of a helper.

Because though he names all of these animals, how is he supposed to go about exercising dominion over all the earth? And how is he supposed to obey the command to be fruitful and multiply?

[22:22] It cannot happen. And so Adam begins to realize he's lacking exactly what God has said. And so immediately following that, we read this, but for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him, so the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man.

And then while he was sleeping he took one of his ribs and he fashioned the woman from that rib. You see what's happening here? Adam begins to demonstrate his authority, he realizes he's lacking something, so God creates woman, and then what is the first thing that Adam does when he sees Eve?

Verse 23, then the man said, this at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. In other words, he's recognizing at last here's someone like me.

He's seen all the animals, he's named all the animals, and there's none like him. None of them are made in God's image. None possess his capacities and his abilities, so now at last here's someone like me.

Here's someone made in God's image. Here's someone who possesses many of the abilities that I possess. And yet, what's the first thing he does after that declaration?

[23:39] She should be called woman because she was taken out of man. First thing Adam does is he names her, just as he had the animals.

She's not like the animals. She's like me. She's bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She's image of God. And yet, Adam realizes nevertheless, he remains in relation to her in a position of authority.

Now, am I just going out on a limb with that? Am I stretching that naming issue? Not at all. Look at chapter 3 again. When God begins to speak to Adam, what does he say to him? What's Adam's fault in the fall?

Primarily. Verse 17, to Adam he said, because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you. What is that?

It doesn't mean, Adam, you're not supposed to ever listen to Eve. It doesn't mean you can't ever take her advice or listen to her counsel. That's not the point at all. Here, listen means obey. You obeyed Eve.

[24:48] You did what she said to do rather than leading and exercising your God-given authority. In fact, all of Genesis 3 is presented as a reversal of Genesis chapter 2.

See, in chapter 2 you have a clear order that Paul affirms actually in 1 Corinthians. You have God who's in authority and he's the one who makes everything. He makes the world and he's making people. And he creates the man and the man exercises authority over the animals.

Then he creates the woman, who like Adam has authority over the animals and yet who is under her husband's authority.

So you have a clear God, man, woman, rest of creation underneath both the man and the woman. That's the order of things. Look at the order of things in chapter 3.

First we're introduced to the serpent, a creature. Now, obviously Satan in the guise of a creature, but why does he pick this guise? Why not just appear as he does elsewhere as an angel of light?

[25:56] If he's going to deceive, why not go all out? Why choose an animal of some sort? Because he's intentionally reversing God's created order. First you have the serpent, and then he says to the woman, he addresses her first, he never even addresses Adam, and then she turns and gives the fruit to Adam later on, and then finally, in verse 8, God appears on the scene.

They heard the sound of the Lord God walking. So it's reversed. Creation, creation, serpent, creature, woman, man, finally God.

So chapter 3 reads as a reversal of God's decreed order of things in chapter 2. And the reason why I'm pointing all of this out to you is to show you that when we talk about different roles for men and women, we're not talking about something that we have made up.

We're not talking about something that's the product of a sinful fallen world. We're talking about something that God wove into the fabric of creation. In fact, this is what he has designed marriage for.

Marriage is supposed to be a display of this male-female relationship. The idea here that God is presenting in Genesis chapter 2 is not that all men are in authority over all women.

[27:21] We don't see that anywhere in the Bible. The idea here is that within this institution of marriage that God is creating, you have clear roles.

You have a husband who leads. You have a wife who submits to his leadership. And then you have God who gives them their large direction and purposes in life.

And that's the way that he's designed it. That's the way that he has set it up. And we can rebel against that all that we want, but we're rebelling against the way that he has made us and designed us and created us to function.

And when you rebel against the way that God has designed you to function, you rebel against the things that can bring you the most joy and pleasure and happiness in the world. You know, when you try to use a wrench as a hammer, you can get the job done, but it takes longer and it's more irritating.

If you don't follow these role distinctions within marriage, marriage can, I mean, you can stay married even for your whole life and you can have good kids and you can raise a family and all those things, but the level of frustration and difficulty is only increased when you ignore God's intentions.

[28:41] And the amount of joy that you can receive out of that is decreased. Anytime that we go against God's designs and purposes for something, we cut ourselves off from the full experience of joy that he intends for us to have in the midst of the thing that he has created.

And so it's not complicated, it's not difficult, he's designed different roles, although men and women are of equal value and worth, and we have the same big purpose that of exercising dominion to the glory of God over all the earth, we have different things that we do in marriage in relation to one another as we carry that out.

There are a lot of practical implications of recognizing this and some of them are more obvious than others. But before we look at those, I just want us to continue to the end of the passage here, and then we'll jump to the New Testament to see how the New Testament applies to Genesis chapter 2.

So Adam has said in verse 23, This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She's going to be called woman because she was taken out of man. She shall be called Isha because she's taken out of Ish.

Naming her and yet identifying him with himself in her name. verse 24 is Moses comment on this one flesh union in verse 23.

[30:03] Therefore, because this is the case, because men and women are created equally in the image of God and yet distinct and he has authority, therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife and they shall become one flesh.

This is definition conditional of marriage. Marriage is the severing of your primary commitment to the family in which you were born and raised and it is the uniting of yourself with someone of the opposite sex in a permanent fashion.

Notice, a man will leave his father and mother. Up to this point in time, up until marriage, for most people, their primary relationships are with their parents and with their siblings.

That's their family. That's the center of things. But it's no longer the center when marriage enters the picture. Leaving father and mother doesn't mean you no longer see them or talk to them.

It means that you're severing those old lines of relationship the way that they existed. No longer is the man directly under the authority of his father and mother.

[31:15] Now he's the head of his own household. Severing those lines. Leaving father and mother and now, it's translated in ESV as hold fast. He's going to hold fast to his wife.

It means to be covenantally joined together. This particular word that's translated hold is used in a lot of sort of covenantal passages throughout the Old Testament. And it's often used to describe God's holding to and clinging to his people.

So this is not just any sort of relationship. This is not a casual commitment. commitment. This is a covenantal commitment. He will hold fast.

He will be permanently joined to his wife. That's exactly how Jesus understood marriage. I want you to hold your place in Genesis and I want you to turn all the way over to the Gospel of Matthew.

In Matthew chapter 19, Jesus is asked a question relating to marriage by the religious leaders of his day. In particular, they're asking him a question about divorce.

[32 : 20] Chapter 19, verse 3, we're told that Pharisees came up to him and tested him by saying, Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any reason at all or for any cause?

And Jesus immediately quotes Genesis 1 and then Genesis 2. He answered, Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female?

No, there's Genesis chapter 1. And he said, Therefore, here's the verse we just read, Genesis 2, 24. Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife and the two shall become one flesh.

Now here's Jesus' application. Here's his understanding of that. So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.

In other words, Jesus' answer to the question about divorce is, you don't understand God's original purposes for marriage if you're asking that question. Because when God created man in the beginning, he made man male and female.

[33 : 34] And when he united them together, he made them one flesh. They were covenantally joined. and what God joins together, we don't have the right to tear apart.

Jesus understands marriage to be a permanent, lasting, covenantal bond between a man and a woman that God himself establishes when they get married.

That's how he understands it. It's, like I said, it's not difficult, it's not complicated. Now, you read through the passage and you find that Jesus allows an exception for fornication or sexual immorality, and that is true, but the basic principle at work here is, it's permanent.

That's what marriage is. That's what it's designed to be. It's not a casual relationship. It's not a test to see if it's going to work out or not. It's permanent.

But then, of course, Jesus is not the only one to make reference to, Genesis 2.24. The Apostle Paul does this well in two different passages. So I want you to turn over, you're done with Matthew, turn over to 1 Corinthians chapter 6.

[34 : 53] In 1 Corinthians chapter 6, the Apostle Paul is addressing numerous issues confronting the church in Corinth, most of them dealing with their sin and their old ways of living that keep coming back.

Now he says, beginning in verse 15, do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?

Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? He says, never. Do you not know that one who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her?

Here it is. For as it is written, the two will become one flesh. What's his point here? Well, historically the issue was that there were pagan temples in Corinth and really spread all over the Greco-Roman world.

And in many of those temples, the way in which worshippers would conduct themselves was that there would be temple prostitutes in the temple courtyards.

[35:57] And they believed that it would provoke the gods and cause the gods to shower them with favor if they visited those temple prostitutes on a regular basis.

And so Paul is looking at them and saying, you can't have any part in that old lifestyle. You can't do that because when you've committed yourself to Christ, your body is now a member of Christ's body.

Your body belongs to Him and it has now become a temple in which the Spirit of God dwells. And then he says, don't you understand the reason that God originally created sex in the first place?

The reason that He created it was for this one flesh union of husband and wife. And if you take that act into other areas, you're sinning not only against God's created purposes for marriage, you're sinning against your own body.

it doesn't belong to you anymore. It belongs to Christ. So the whole point, Paul says, of physical intimacy between a man and a woman is so that we can express in a real concrete way the one flesh union of husband and wife in marriage.

[37:21] That's what it exists for. It exists to be an expression of your covenantal union together. And if you use it outside of marriage, you're automatically using it in a way that goes against God's creative purposes and designs for it.

So Jesus says that the one flesh union of marriage is indivisible, you can't separate it. And the apostle Paul comes along and says, the one flesh union of marriage is only intended for marriage and not intended to be experienced elsewhere.

One other place that will help us to understand God's purposes in designing us in the way he's designed us, Ephesians chapter 5. This is the last place in which we find this passage quoted in the New Testament.

And it is in probably the most important place because in Ephesians chapter 5, the apostle Paul begins to discuss towards the end of the chapter, he begins to discuss what marriage ought to look like among believers.

He starts off in verse 22 and he gives some instructions that fit nicely with the pattern we've seen in Genesis 2 and 3. Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord, for the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church's body.

[38:39] That fits nicely with Genesis chapters 2 and 3 that present the husband as the head of his wife and the head of his home. Wives submitting to husbands, husbands leading and loving their wives is what Paul describes here.

Verse 24, now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their own husbands. Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. Now move all the way down through the passage to verse 31.

Here's Genesis 2:24. Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife and the two shall become one flesh.

And then he says this mystery, what mystery? The mystery of marriage. The mystery of the one flesh union. The mystery of why did God make us male and female? Why did God create the institution of marriage?

Why did he do all of this? Here it is. This mystery he says is great. It is a big mystery. Could not God have created human beings to function like worms?

[39:47] And every kid knows if you cut a worm in half you get two worms. If you cut it in two smaller pieces you get a dead worm. But if you cut it in half we're at the right spot you get two worms.

And they'll both heal and they'll turn into worms and if you let them grow for a little bit you can chop them again. And you got four worms. Right? It's not difficult. That's what you can do with most common worms.

Not a caterpillar. Trust me. It will not work on a caterpillar. If it has legs don't chop it in half. But you can do that with a worm. God is only creative. He could have done that with human beings.

Maybe less gross than chopping us in half. But there's no doubt that he could have created us in such a way that we could reproduce without having two distinct genders. He could have done it. He did it in the animal world.

He could have done it with us. And yet he did not. He created us different male and female. And he designed us to be joined together in this covenantal permanent union called marriage in which we experience physical intimacy normally leading to reproduction.

[40 : 50] And that's a great mystery as to why he did it that way. Why do it that way? Here's the answer. This mystery is profound and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

if you ask the big why question why is Adam deficient by God's own design? Why does he need a wife?

Why does he need a counterpart to himself? Why have things been designed in this way? Why has God set it up for men and women to be together and not in any other way?

Why has he made it a permanent bond? Why does he restrict certain activities only to this relationship? Why? Because marriage exists to be a picture of Christ's union with his own bride the church.

Marriage exists to declare to the world this is how Jesus loves his bride and this is how his bride demonstrates her love and submission back to him. And our marriages are successful or they are failures to the degree that they accurately present to the world a picture of Christ's relationship with the church.

[42 : 09] They are successful to the degree that they present an accurate picture of Christ's relationship to the church. You can stay married for 60 years and yet ultimately from God's perspective your marriage will be a failure because it did not present an accurate picture of Christ's relationship with his bride.

God's their which means that we must begin to look at all of these issues not from a standpoint of what works for me not from a standpoint of what feels right or what feels good for me or how someone else's unique expression of their love and their circumstances we can no longer look at it that way we begin to look at things and say how did God make us how did he design us and why did he make us that way and the ultimate answer is it's all about the glory of Jesus.

Let's pray.