

FOR THIS REASON

- I. **Why Marriage?**
- II. **Marriage is God's Idea and it is All Good** (Gen.2:18-25)
 - A. **Not Good.** Being alone isn't good. The man needs a helper (Verse 18).
 - The idea is a complement. Man is deficient as male; he needs a complement to fulfill his calling in the world where God has placed him.
 - “[T]he sexes are complementary: the true partnership is expounded by the terms that are used (*a helper fit for him...*; literally ‘a help as opposite him’ i.e., ‘corresponding to him’)...” (Derek Kidner)
 - B. **Discovery.** God gives Adam a task so he will discover his need (Verse 19-20).
 - Each species come in pairs: male and female. They are the same yet opposite each other and can't be who God designed them to be unless they join together.
 - Adam had no such partner to make him complete in the task God had given him. It was not good for him to be alone. And the animals prove it to him.
 - C. **Fundamentally Together.** In her creation, the woman is fundamentally a part of the man (Verse 21-22).
 - D. **Delight.** The man is delighted with the fact that his partner is fundamentally a part of who he is (Verse 23).
 - Adam speaks in poetry to express his wonder. The woman is like no animal. She is far, far better: His soul unites with hers as no animal's could.

E. **A New Loyalty.** This union is more important than your connection with the very people who brought you into this world and raised you (Verse 24).

- The Revised Standard Version translates “hold fast” as “cleave”. The man and woman cling to one another, adhere to one another. In the past their loyalty was to father and mother. Now they turn and their point of reference and attachment is each other.

F. **“One Flesh”**

- (Verse 24) “[T]he ‘one flesh’ relationship entails more than sex. It is the profound fusion of two lives into one shared life together, by the mutual consent and covenant of marriage. It is the complete and permanent giving over of oneself into a new circle of shared existence with one’s partner.” (Raymond Ortlund)

G. **Perfect Ease.** This is a relationship of perfect ease. Each completely knows the other and there is no embarrassment in it (Verse 25).

III. Together for What?

- A. **To Represent** God in the Garden as his image (Verse 26a).
- B. **To Rule** over the Garden for God (Verse 26b & 28).
- C. **To Rule United** as two yet as one (Verse 27).
- D. **To Multiply.** To bear children together and raise them as images of God continuing and expanding the work God had given the first couple (Verse 28).

IV. Sin That Hinders the Marriage Union (Gen 3)

- A. **Adam’s Commandment .** God commanded the man to avoid the Tree of Knowledge *before* he created the woman (2:17).

- B. **Adam's Failure.** The man failed in his leadership role to teach his wife and to protect her from the serpent (3:1-6).
- The man participated in the sin without being deceived (3:6).
 - The man blamed the woman for his sin when he was responsible to lead her and to protect her (3:12).
- C. **God's Discipline.** Part of the curse for sin involves tension in the marriage relationship.
- Difficulty in child bearing (3:16a).
 - Conflict over authority in the relationship (3:16b).
- i. "Desire" is not sexual. This can be translated "desire against," i.e. the woman will have a desire against—a tendency to resist—her husband's leadership. (Gen. 4:7)
- ii. "And he shall rule over you." This is not a reference to sacrificial leadership but to an oppressive use of power for selfish ends.
- Difficulty in doing the work God had given them in subduing the earth (3:17).

V. **The Ultimate Reason for Marriage is the Gospel** (Eph. 5:22-32)

- A. **Mystery.** In the Bible, a mystery is something that is hidden, and when it is revealed, it makes sense to everyone.
- B. **Christ and the Church.** Beginning with the institution of marriage between the first couple, God intended it to "refer to" or "reflect" or "image" Christ's relationship with the church.
- He loved the church and gave up his life for her by dying on the cross (Eph. 5:25-29).

- She responds to his work on the Cross by giving her life for him and following his leadership (Eph. 5:22-24).
- C. **Unity.** This kind of marriage can only happen through the gospel, which brings unity that was hindered through sin and God’s curse, which followed sin.
- Unity between God and man is restored.
 - Unity between a husband and wife becomes possible.
- D. **The husband: leading through love.** So, like Christ, a husband—through self-sacrificing love—can now lead his wife. His goals become God’s glory and their good as a united couple, with her needs coming first.
- He can overcome the curse of his proneness to sinful domination or abdication.
- E. **The wife: submitting through trust.** So, like the church, a wife can now joyfully submit to her husband as he leads her toward goals that are for God’s glory and her good.
- She can overcome the curse of her proneness to usurp his legitimate authority
- F. **Two Dominions.**
- Marriage should reflect the Creator’s dominion in the earth furthered by a couple being fruitful, multiplying and subduing the earth.
 - Marriage should reflect the Redeemer’s dominion in the earth bringing this fallen world under his subjection through the gospel.

VI. Think “Together” As You Tend the Garden of Your Life

- A. Are we growing in knowing and loving God **together**?
- B. Are we running our home **together** so that it is fruitful?

- C. Are we approaching our relationship **together** to reflect the gospel?
- D. Are we serving our church **together** so that the work of the gospel is furthered?
- E. Are we making decisions **together** so that we can fulfill our calling as two who are one?
- F. Are we raising our children **together** so that they glorify God?
- G. Are we using the money we earn **together** to fulfill God's call for us to subdue the earth and spread the gospel?

- H. Are we **together** overcoming the disunity that our sin creates between us?
- I. Are we facing trials, difficulties, and sufferings of life **together**?

VII. What Does It Take?

- A. Enormous amounts of conversation, prayer, and united decision making and doing life together according to God's Word and not our sinful passions.

- B. Intentional, focused, Spirit-powered effort. Experiencing the union that was created through our vows won't just happen by living together. Two becoming one is a joyful work, a fulfilling work, a productive work. But as with all of God's gifts, it requires effort. We must apply ourselves to what he has supplied in the gift of marriage.

VIII. Why Marriage?

Because through the joy and fulfillment of marriage we glorify God as we reflect the effects of the gospel. We glorify God by doing life together. The joy that begins on your wedding day will only grow as your union grows. And that union grows as you face life together through faith in the Giver of the gift of marriage.

For Next Session: Read "Speaking Redemptively"

Genesis 2:18-25

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." 19 So out of the ground the LORD God 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. 20 The man gave names to all the 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. 21 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. 22 And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. 23 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."

24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. 25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

Gen 1:26-28

26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Genesis 3:1-6, 12-13, 16-19

1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'" 2 And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, 3 but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" 4 But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate...

12 The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." 13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."...

16 To the woman he said,

"I will surely multiply your pain
in childbearing;
in pain you shall bring forth
children.
Your desire shall be for your
husband,
and he shall rule over you."

17 And 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,
'You shall not eat of it,'
cursed is the ground because of you;
in pain you shall eat of it all the
days of your life;
18 thorns and thistles it shall bring
forth for you;

and you shall eat the plants of the field.
19 By the sweat of your face
you shall eat bread,
till you return to the ground,
for out of it you were taken;
for you are dust,
and to dust you shall return.”

Eph. 5:22-32

22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. 28 In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, 30 because we are members of his body.

31 “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” 32 This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

From the Ground Up: Building Marriages for the Glory of God
Session 1: “For This Reason” John Loftness
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FOR THIS REASON

Discussion Questions

1. Turn to section VI of the outline: Where do you see God at work in your marriage? Communicate your observations to each other.
2. How can the gospel help you as you pursue becoming one as a couple?
3. In Section IV, we discussed how sin hinders the marriage union. What sin patterns have you begun to observe in your hearts since you were married? Communicate to your spouse how he/she can help you change in this area.
4. Turn to Section VI of the outline: What challenges you the most? Why?