

ESSENTIAL TRUTHS FOR OUR TIMES

GOD'S DESIGN FOR MARRIAGE AND SEXUALITY

In Genesis 1 God declared what He made "good," except for the man and woman, which He declared to be "very good." We are told that the only thing that we are told is not good before sin and the fall is Adam's being alone (Gen 2:18). Even in an idyllic garden, humans were not made to be alone but to live in a community of equals that mirrors God's nature in the Trinity. The God of the Bible is "one," and Adam was designed to walk in a covenantal relationship that reflected that union. **The marriage covenant was essential for humanity to reflect the image of our Creator.**

God designed marriage to fill the lack that existed in Adam when he was alone. This was not a design flaw in creation but an intentional expression of how humans would mirror God's nature. The need was intended to be met by a specific helper in Eve. God Himself is referred to as a "helper" so women should not be misunderstood to be an optional accessory any more than God would be considered non-essential. The dependence on one another was set in creation before sin entered the world.

In Genesis we see that the first woman was taken from the side of the man, which beautifully illustrates that she belongs alongside him in partnership. This is in stark contrast to misogyny, which places women behind men in ungodly subservience, and feminism, which places women in front of men in domination. Lies abound that twist the partnership between man and woman in creation into unredeemed relationships that confuse roles, sexuality, and even gender.

God is Spirit, and while he does not have a gender, He is revealed in Scripture as Father, and He comes to us as the Son, in the person of Jesus. While this is clearly a choice made by God, He makes both men and women in His image. While man and woman have distinctive attributes, they are both image-bearers of God with equal value, worth, and dignity. It is wrong to abuse Scriptures to indicate anything but that truth.

Again, it is important to note that God designed marriage and created the first marriage covenant, so He is the sole authority of what it is. He defines it clearly as one man, one woman living as one flesh until death ends the covenant. This necessarily eliminates alternative lifestyles like bestiality, homosexuality, fornication, polygamy, adultery, and the like. Ideas like no-fault divorce and hooking up are common in our culture, but they are not in God's design for

marriage or sexuality. Biblical marriage is the sole place that sexuality is to be enjoyed as husband and wife spend their lives becoming "one" as a reflection of the covenantal nature of God.

After recording the first marriage, Genesis 2:24 outlines the process where a man can move from being alone to being married (leave, cleave, consummate). Both Jesus and Paul repeat this process throughout the New Testament as the pattern God intends for marriage and sexuality (Matt. 19:5; Mark 10:7–8; Eph. 5:31). In addition to this process, God also sets an order in the covenant by giving Adam the responsibility of naming Eve. God holds him responsible for standing by while Eve is being deceived by the devil, watching while she is sinning, and then partaking of that sin himself (Genesis 3:6-9). Further, Adam's sin, not Eve's, is passed on throughout the generations to come only to be cleansed by the "last Adam," "Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:12–21; 1 Cor. 15:45). Finally, the creation account is reinforced throughout all of Scripture as husbands are to lead their wives and homes in the same loving way that Christ leads His Church (Gen. 2:18; cf. Gen. 5:2; 1 Cor. 11:2–16; 14:33–34; Eph. 5:21–33; Col. 3:18; 1 Tim. 2:11–15; Titus 2:3–5; 1 Pet. 3:1).

God's design is that husband and wife walk in complementary leadership. They need each other and inspire each other with perspectives the other doesn't have. It makes them both better leaders. It is similar to the way a great jazz band works together to make great music. One musician listens to the other, with all their ability and creativity, and it inspires them to play better themselves. There is a multiplication of creativity that makes everyone better.

Husbands and wives need each other. Husbands are to love their wives like Christ loves the Church and wives are to be subject to their husbands as to the Lord (Ephesians 5:22-25, Colossians 3:18-19, 1 Peter 3:1-7). This results in a beautiful need for, and cherishing of, each other that causes both to become more than they could on their own. This is how the Godhead loves and was the creation design for husbands and wives in marriage (Genesis 1:26-28).

While the husband is responsible in the marriage, it does not mean that a husband is the ultimate authority; God is. In addition, there are other delegated authorities like the state and the local church governments that exercise authority over men. This idea also means that the wife should have independent thoughts and influence her husband as they lead their family and follow Jesus together. Wives are not less intelligent or competent than their husbands

Rather, they are meant to work together in complementary roles. It also means that wives submit to their husbands the way Jesus submitted to the Father while husbands are to lovingly lead their wives just as Jesus serves His Church. Based on this understanding, women should

marry men that they can respect and trust enough to follow, and men should lovingly serve their wives in a relationship that reflects the nature of God and the gospel.