



Two years ago, I was on a study sabbatical. I had two topics I wanted to study and one of them was on abuse and trauma. Some of you may wonder, “Why would you choose to study *that* on a sabbatical?”

One of the main reasons why I chose that study was because of the many counseling situations I’ve been involved in where someone was abused: a couple with marital issues and the husband worked 90+ hours per week and had significant anger issues. One day, while driving in the car with their children, the husband was so angry at his wife, he punched her in the face in front of the children. I recall another scenario talking with two different women recounting their previous marriages, and one spoke of her husband dragging her by her hair. Or, within my first year of being a youth pastor, a young teen girl opening up about her brother molesting her. And, a few years later, another teen girl opening up about the same. Then I would hear of ministry leaders being sexually promiscuous with women, manipulating and abusing them. I also am involved in coming alongside couples whose marriages have been falling apart because of an addictive pull to pornography. Somehow people can justify pornography as though nobody gets hurt, when in reality a high percentage of women involved in pornography are actually enslaved. Did you know Americans spend 12 billion dollars a year on pornography, and at any given second, 28,258 people are viewing pornography.¹ Sadly, this epidemic is no longer only a man’s problem, but it’s increasingly a temptation for women now. I recall, years ago, reading a Bible commentary by a well-known Christian in the 1900’s named Francis Schaeffer, and in commentating on Romans 1, he said something to the effect of how Paul first shows the sexual deterioration of men in Romans 1. Then he moves to women. Societally, men lead the way (as an example), and you know things have gone really awry, when women follow suit. This is exactly what we’re seeing in our culture.

But maybe you say, “I don’t view pornography. I’m not involved in any sexual sins,” let me ask you, “How do you treat the other gender?” And, in particular, as it relates to Genesis 2 and God’s emphasis on the creation of woman: How do you treat women? And, if you’re a woman, how do you view yourself or men? You may not be physically abusive, but do you view women with genuine love? Do you raise them up and appreciate God’s work in and through women? Do you value women as God values them? I struggle so much when I hear of preachers who diminish women. I become angered when I hear men who think that, in their marriages, they can shut their wives up by simply saying, “You’re supposed to submit to me.” That’s not submission. And, if a husband speaks that way, that’s not the responsible love that God calls men to. I cringe when I hear men mockingly joke about women’s apparent weaknesses.

I remember during my sabbatical, while reading, I was struck with a thought that I believe speaks fully of the heart of God. The thought was, “**God’s intent is that the safest place for a woman to be is in the presence of a man, but in actuality, it’s not the safest place.**” And as I was reading, I had to pause

¹ <https://theexodusroad.com/porn-and-human-trafficking-the-facts-you-need-to-know/>; <https://nbc-2.com/news/2021/01/12/heres-how-your-porn-habit-could-be-helping-human-sex-traffickers/amp/>

because I got tears in my eyes realizing that for many women, the opposite is true. Isn't that a horror? As a result, many women and men don't know God's true, glorious intention for male-female relationships. They're viewed as objects.

So, in essence, I studied on abuse and trauma because I've seen how men in particular do not prize women as God does. But, I'm immeasurably grateful that God wants all his creation to see his intention for godly relationships in Genesis 2. I pray this narrative would compel you to glorify God as men and women. So, let me give the main idea of the sermon: **God's glory is uniquely displayed through women and through the covenant of marriage.** Again, we'll break this main idea down, and hopefully we all will rejoice in God's design. So, let's start with the first part of the main idea:

1. **God's glory is uniquely displayed through women (vv. 18-23).**

As we've been studying the Genesis creation narrative, we've discovered many things that are found here that are different than other creation narratives. In various ways, we look at Genesis and see how unique it is in emphasizing God's power and glory and even human's placement in God's creation. We're not slaves of tired gods. We are image-bearers of the all-powerful Sovereign God. When we enter chapter 2, it might not surprise us that Adam is emphasized. That might be a shared commonality with ancient narratives. Ancient narratives seem to emphasize man's supreme nature, and get this: no known ancient creation narratives talk about the creation of woman. Yet, the Bible talks about the creation of woman. Why? Because ever since the Fall, women (in various ways and forms) have been treated unlovingly by men. Ancient beliefs have held that men were more valuable. Even ancient writings from followers of God have stated that men are in God's image, but not women.

But if you look at Genesis 2, God is saying something important. In the midst of glaring silence about women, God says, "Look at woman!" How do we know God is doing this? Because of a phrase found in verse 18: **Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone. . ."**² Do you remember after the days of creation that each day, it is said to be good? And, this word for good can also mean "beautiful." But there's also an idea of purpose to it. Things are all functioning with purpose as God intended. This is both good and beautiful! As we enter chapter 2, and God zooms in on the creation of mankind, we read a shocking statement. Something isn't functioning right. That's neither good nor beautiful.

What is not good? Answer: that man should be alone. If this world was filled with only men, that would *not be good!* This teaches us an important truth: **God's glory is on limited display with only Adam/men.** Remember that the creation narrative is written to the Israelites to learn about who God is and also how they are to live as a nation under God's rule. They are to follow in God's design to rule under his rule. But how are they going to rule effectively if they don't align their thinking with God's thinking? They can't. The same is true for us. If we are followers of Jesus, our thinking is to be renewed so that we can discern how to live out God's will (like what Paul says in Romans 12:1-2). So, get this: God's glory is on limited display with only men.

Too often, people think "helper fit for" only applies to marriage, but it doesn't. This creation narrative tells us in chapter 1 that the image of God is revealed most fully in God creating two genders: male and female. At this point, I think God is speaking to the reality that men and women are to work together to rule under his rule – whether or not you're married. The apostle Paul said that for some it would be better to be like him (single). He's not negating the words of Genesis 2 because he ministered with

² [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ge 2:18.

women, too! So, here in Genesis 2, God himself announces to all of creation (to ancient Israel and the surrounding pagan nations) that it's not good that men should be alone in the world. God created mankind as male and female to image forth his glory more fully, and we ought to agree with God that it's not good to have a male-only society (nor would it be good for a female-only society).

But will Adam recognize this? God doesn't state his assessment with Adam. Instead, he parades animals before Adam. 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 brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name.**³ Why does God have an animal parade, though? To get Adam to see his need. To get Adam to agree with God. And, in a society unmarred by sin, Adam does agree. Look at verse 20: **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.**⁴ The text seems to indicate that as Adam was naming the animals, he started to search to see if there was someone for him. If the animals had a pair, what about his pair?

We'll discuss a little more what the phrase "helper fit for" means, but let me simply say this now: the phrase indicates that Adam could not fulfill the commission given to him by God to rule without a corresponding person to help him. There was not found a helper fit for Adam. So, now what? Adam can't solve the issue, but he agrees with the Lord. And the Lord solves the apparent problem. Let's read on in verses 21-22: **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.**⁵

Animals are created from the dust of the earth. Adam is created from the dust of the earth. But there's something different taking place here. God's making the helper. In the English translations, we read that God takes from Adam's rib. What's intriguing is that whenever this Hebrew word is used *anywhere else*, it's *never* translated as rib. The word actually is simply translated as "side." We're not given details as to the muscle group or the type of bone. It's just a phrase saying God took from the side in order to make woman. This actually has significance. I agree with the old preacher, Matthew Henry, who wrote that **the woman is "not made out of his head to top him, not out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved"** (as quot. in Walke, *Genesis: A Commentary*, p. 89). Again, at this point in time, we're not talking about marriage relationship. We're talking about the role of women and men together under God's ruling mandate. Women are created from the side of men. They don't rule over men. Men don't domineer over women.

This leads me to go back to the phrase "helper fit for." What does that mean? Well, men need women to rule beautifully for God's image to shine forth in this world. But there's more. Interestingly, this Hebrew phrase can be translated as **"conspicuous (standing out in clear view" or "in front of")**. But there's even more. A closely related verb means **"declare" or "reveal"** (see Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17*, p. 175). Some people have completely flattened the phrase "helper fit for" by saying that a woman's role is simply to help out with whatever the man wants. If the man wants the woman to do something, she better do it because she's the "helper fit for." That's so wrong. This Hebrew word for "helper" is only ever used elsewhere of someone strong helping the weak. I don't think this means that men are inherently weaker. But the context here is that God has created humans with

³ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ge 2:19.

⁴ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ge 2:20.

⁵ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ge 2:21–22.

inherent weaknesses. Yes, this would include women. But from a cultural perspective, many times cultures tended to think the women were weak. The men were strong. So here, God's confronting us. Women are given to help with the weaknesses. To add to this, as a helper, woman's role is to stand out in clear view and reveal.

What does this mean? When I was in college, I took an ethics course. In that course, my professor spoke of the prioritization of relationships with a biblical perspective. He went to the creation order and stated that the creation order reveals that God is moving from lesser glory to greater glory. In Genesis 1, we see that humankind is the greatest expression of God's glory. But we move to Genesis 2, and we discover in the order of creation, woman is last. My professor then went on to say that he believes that this reveals that **woman is the capstone of creation**. What does that mean? My professor wasn't saying that woman is more valuable than man. Think about a capstone. Years ago, I was in Paris with Isaiah and Samuel. **As we were roaming the city, we saw an obelisk that Egypt donated to the French government. At the top is a capstone. What's under the capstone?** The tip of the obelisk. Think of the tip of the obelisk being man – created from the earth. The capstone then perfectly corresponds with man – but that capstone brings attention to the top. This is woman's privilege. She is the glory of mankind.

Now, as soon as I say this, you might say, "Wait a second! It sounds like you're saying women are more valuable." No! Male and female we are created in the image of God. But let me use a different example. When you here that Jesus reveals the glory of the Father, do you think Jesus is more valuable than the Father? No! But Jesus does uniquely reveal the glory of the Father, right? Yes. So it is with woman. She uniquely displays the glory of man. It's not only that wives uniquely display the glory of their husbands. It's that woman uniquely display the glory of mankind. This is what I believe the apostle Paul is getting at when he says in 1 Corinthians 11 that **"woman is the glory of man."**⁶

Do you see how shocking this might have been for the ancient cultures to read this? Does this narrative shock you? Men, do you view women like this? Women, do you know that God made you with this privilege? As you think about this, you could be tempted to say, "What does this look like in real life?" You might really be struggling with power dynamics in your head. You might be tempted to think, "Who's in control?" "Aren't men the leaders?" And as you think through all of this, I think you might be struggling with warped, fallen definitions of leadership and responsibility, and even submission.

As I was pondering this passage for the last month, I had some conversation with Jonathan Wilwerding, and he shared with me some writings from C.S. Lewis that seem to reveal the teachings of Genesis 2. In the *Chronicles of Narnia*, we have male and female siblings. In one scene, Peter states that their adventures are going to be so exciting, and he leads the way into the forest. Yet, later on, Peter also says that he thinks his sister, Lucy, ought to be the leader because she deserves to lead. He then asks where she's going to take them. Peter says this because Lucy knows Narnia best. But later in the series, it's not Lucy who becomes King. Peter is King. Yet, in the series, it's as if Lucy is the hero.

Lewis does something in his writings that helps to shape how we ought to view men and women. God has designed men and women with responsibilities and giftings as male and female. Men do have great responsibility in their ruling under God's rule. And part of their responsibility is to recognize their need for woman, who shine forth the glory of man. They ought to raise up women, like Peter does with Lucy. Why? Because women are the capstone of creation. Do you see this?

⁶ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Co 11:7.

In case you don't, let's take this further in the Scriptures. Run to Proverbs. There, you are given a contrast between two women: Lady Folly and Lady Wisdom. Then, in the last chapter of the Proverbs, we have wisdom personified in a godly wife. She is wisdom, and her husband and children raise her up! They celebrate her! Then, move into the New Testament. Who was the safest place for women? In the presence of Jesus. The woman at the well, whose reputation preceded her, could sit with Jesus and Jesus wasn't going to use her like other men. He was going to give her what she needed. Mary Magdalene could walk into a group of men and go up to Jesus and clean his feet with her hair. And where the men thought that was promiscuous, Jesus simply stated that those who have been forgiven much, love much. Then, Jesus on the cross, in one of his final words, looks to John and tells him to take care of his mother after he dies!

Jesus, who never married, reveals God's intention. The safest place for women ought to be the presence of men. And, at least in the end of Genesis 2, Adam realizes this. God makes Eve, and then we read Adam's response: 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."** ⁷

Get this. There's amazement and appreciation. We ought to have this as well. Yet, increasingly in our culture, there's a diminishing of the beauty and goodness of genders. God says it's good and very beautiful that there's male and female, and it's good and very beautiful for men and women to function as such. Yet, today, we diminish genders. We try to say there are more than two. We don't want to be limited. Why? Well, I believe it's because humans always seek to suppress the truth about God. God's glory is revealed through the beauty of maleness and femaleness in his image. Suppress that, and God's image is not as clearly seen. Oh, how I pray that we all would value God's creation of man and woman! I pray that we would value our own gender and know we're fearfully and wonderfully made. And we would value one another so that we shine forth God's glory!

Now, we move into the second part of the main idea:

2. God's glory is uniquely displayed through the covenant of marriage (vv. 23-24).

The phrase "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" was covenantal terminology. The bone represented strength. The flesh represented weakness. And Adam is stating that both have strengths and weaknesses. But they are better together. But he adds, "bone of my bones." In other words, he's saying they share "in weakness and in strength." Sounds kind of similar to our current marriage covenants: for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health. . .

How could he immediately covenant with her like this? He's not just stating a hope or desire. He's stating a promise under God's rule. He's accountable to the Lord for this covenant. How could he do this? Because he sees woman as she is. These are the first words recorded of man. The very first recorded words of man is shock and awe of the capstone, the woman! I don't know how to read Hebrew, but I've heard that the Hebrew poetic form her strongly emphasizes immense joy and amazement at woman. She's so glorious, he immediately covenants with her. Adam understood that God's intention was that the woman is the capstone, and that man would prize her. And God's intention is that the general pattern of creation would then move to covenant marriage.

Please notice what I said. I didn't say that all creation is to be married, but that the general pattern is marriage. Jesus, the most whole human was not married. As stated earlier, Paul encouraged singleness

⁷ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ge 2:23.

as well as marriage. So, if you're single, you aren't less human. You are gloriously created by God as a man or a woman to shine forth his glory with other men and women. Israel needed to see this. And, we need to see this today. We also need to see that marriage is a general pattern. Verse 24 says, **"24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."**⁸

The phrases "leave" and "hold fast" are used elsewhere in the Old Testament to refer to covenantal terms. To leave is not necessarily literal. It doesn't mean that a man has to leave the physical presence of his parents or not live in the same area. But instead, it means that his commitment is not primarily to his parents anymore. "Hold fast" is not literal either. It's referencing the commitment. Now that his parents are not the main commitment, his wife has taken that role. He holds fast. And the two become one flesh. This is not primarily speaking of sexual union, although that's a physical picture of that. This is speaking of their whole life enmeshed. There's a unique oneness that takes place through the marriage covenant. Two image-bearers of God give themselves entirely to the other to reveal God's glory to the world.

But you still may say, "Why?" The answer is found in Ephesians: **"32 This mystery is profound, and I am saying that [marriage] refers to Christ and the church. 33 However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband."**⁹ How does marriage point to Christ and the church? Men are to show the sacrificial love of Christ towards the church – seeking to see her growth in godliness through his tender nurture. Women are to reveal the church's role. As the church is to shine Christ, so women in healthy relationships shine their husbands. And, in a healthy relationship, just like with Christ and the Church, the husband exalts his bride, and the bride raises up her husband.

As you hear all of this, you might be confused and wonder, "How can I live all this out? I'm such a mess." It's interesting that the disciples felt this way, too. They even said to Jesus, "It's better to just not get married then." Sadly, the next recorded words we find from Adam are "It was the woman you gave me." Through silence, he let his wife go into sin. And through his words, he put her down.

But praise the Lord for Jesus. He came to save people like us who are a mess. Men and women who have suppressed God's glory and sought our own ways of doing things. **God's glory is uniquely displayed through women and through the covenant of marriage.** If you have turned from your sin and turned to Jesus for cleansing and forgiveness, you can grow in obeying God's will. His will that you would flee sexual immorality. His will is that we would be a new community of people living out the new creation where now we treat other women as sisters and mothers. Where you treat men as fathers and brothers. This is literally what the New Testament says. **We are to be a community of love so that by the grace of Jesus, we show to one another and the world that the New Adam, Jesus, truly saves, and that God's glory can shine once again through men and women displaying his image together.**

But even as I say this, I know there are broken people here. Maybe you, male or female, have suffered abuse and you know you need healing and you want to talk with someone here to receive greater care and help. Or, maybe you realize your sin and you want to know more about Jesus and what it means to be a follower of Christ. Maybe you realize you've sinned by hurting another person created in God's image. Or, maybe there's another issue entirely that God has revealed to you and you need prayer and encouragement. There will be men and women up front ready to talk with you, pray with you and help you. Please take advantage of the opportunity. The Lord loves you. The Lord gives grace.

⁸ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ge 2:24.

⁹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Eph 5:32–33.