

LIVINGHOPE
BIBLE CHURCH

6 | GENESIS 2:18-25

JESUS, MARRIAGE, AND MOTHERS

One of God's greatest avenues of sanctification in the Christian life is marriage and children. Marriage is not about getting the special person of your dreams. Marriage and children are all about being sanctified through service to one another.

Outline

1. THE WEDDING PLANNER (2:18-20)
The Assessment of Marriage
Employment for Marriage
2. THE WEDDING PARTICIPANTS (1:27)
Distinctions in Gender
Complementary in Gender
3. THE WEDDING CEREMONY (2:21-25)
The Officiant of Marriage
A Sleepy Groom
A Helpful Bride
The Song of Marriage
The Definition of Marriage
The Consummation of Marriage
4. A WEDDING THAT IS PRO-MOTHERHOOD (1:27-28)

Call to Worship

Praise the Lord! Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise in the assembly of the godly! ² Let Israel be glad in his Maker; let the children of Zion rejoice in their King! ³ Let them praise his name with dancing, making melody to him with tambourine and lyre! ⁴ For the Lord takes pleasure in his people; he adorns the humble with salvation. ⁵ Let the godly exult in glory; let them sing for joy on their beds. —Psalm 149

Songs

*Wonderful, Merciful Savior
Crown Him with Many Crowns
Before the Throne of God Above
Speak O Lord
Indescribable*

Announcements

WELCOME: We are glad you are here! Be sure to grab a Welcome Packet if you are visiting with us.

Introduction

I heard about an older couple sitting by the fire side. With his arm around his sweetheart, he turned to his wife and the mother of his children, and he said, “**After fifty years I’ve found you tried and true.**” His dear **wife was hard of hearing**, so she said, “**What?**” He repeated, “After fifty years I’ve found you tried and true.” She replied, “**After fifty years I’m tired of you too!**”

Wives, I hope after fifty years you are not tired of your husband! I want to show you the secret to his heart and the secret to a very happy marriage. That secret is living according to God’s design. **You don’t get a good marriage by focusing on each other. You each have to focus on the Lord!** Marriage is a picture of Christ and the church, so pursue Christ, live according to his design, and you will **be content with the Lord and in your marriage.**

In Genesis 2, we consider the **final order of creation**. We talked about:

- The order of God’s **image** in man. Every life is precious from conception to consummation.
- The order of **gender**. God made mankind male and female.
- The order of **work**. We need to work six days and rest one out of seven.
- Today is God’s order of **marriage**. Marriage is between a man and a woman. One man with one woman for life—until death parts you. That’s the original prototype.

God gave marriage for man to **enjoy**. Marriage is **under attack in our country**. For the first time in history, we are having to **define what a marriage** and a family is. Our culture is crumbling because of the destruction of the family. We all need a reminder that **when you reject God’s way, chaos and sorrow and confusion and misery follow**. We have rejected God’s way. It’s **Mother’s Day**, so let’s consider this morning, God’s order of creation for marriage and children.

Key thought: One of God’s greatest avenues of sanctification in the Christian life is marriage and children. Marriage is not about getting the special person of your dreams. Marriage and children are all about being sanctified through service to one another.

Marriage is a wonderful way to reflect Christ and to promote the gospel in your life and in the lives of the children God gives you. So let’s first consider the one who invented marriage: our **divine wedding planner**.

God is going to get this right because he is God, and because it is a picture of Christ and his bride. God made marriage to reflect Christ’s love for his bride, and his bride’s love for Christ.

1. THE WEDDING PLANNER (2:18-20)

Consider the divine Author of marriage. He determines that it’s not at all good that man should live alone.

THE ASSESSMENT OF MARRIAGE

God considers his whole creation and comes to the conclusion that something in it is “not good.” It’s not good that Adam should be alone.

Genesis 2:18 | Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”

Most people, unless they are given the gift of singleness, are called to be married. Some of the greatest people to ever live were single: **Jesus, Paul, Mary Magdalene, Jeremiah, and Daniel**. But for most, God calls you to seek out companionship. It’s not good, the Lord said, for man to be alone.

God made the wife to be a helper that fits the man. The phrase “helper fit” could be translated “a helper” or literally in Hebrew could be “an adversarial equal” such as a puzzle piece with the specific goal of helping.¹ God has been pronouncing blessing over his creation, seeing that it was “good” (cf 1:25).

Before the first man could get very far in his life in the Garden, the **LORD God said, “Wait a second... I’m not done.”** Everything the Lord had made was good, but there was one thing left that was not good – “It is not good for the man to be alone” (2:18a).

This is the Lord’s assessment, not the man’s complaint. The Lord knew something was missing and he just couldn’t let the man go on without fixing it.² “I will make a helper suitable for him” (2:18b). Only God could make someone who would be the right companion for Adam.

APPLICATION

God’s assessment of Adam in being alone: **it’s not good**. For most of you young men, you need to realize that it’s not good for you to stay single into your 30s. You are taking great RISKS with your purity by staying single for too long. You need to get to loving Jesus, get a job that can support a wife and family and get married to a godly girl. **Then you need to make your wife a mother by multiplying! You need to have lots of children!**

EMPLOYMENT FOR MARRIAGE

God is the divine wedding planner. **Before Adam gets married, the LORD gives him a job**. In doing so, the LORD God raises the man’s awareness that he needs someone else, someone like himself.

The LORD had Adam **survey the animal kingdom** for a suitable helper, a companion to partner with him in his task of caring for the creation, of **imaging God**. The job God gave Adam a job to do was to name the animals and birds and all the living creatures. But there was **no one suitable for Adam**.

Genesis 2:19-20 | 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. ²⁰The 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.

The Lord paraded the animals in front of the man and **the man classified them**, he named them, **exercising dominion over them** like God did when he named the Day and the Night. But as he looked all of them – from the Aardvarks to the Zebras – an ache started to form in his

¹ Davids et al., *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, 93.

² Cf Carter, “Men and Women”, *Genesis*.

soul.³ “For Adam no suitable helper was found” (2:20b). And I can imagine the garden would have gotten pretty messy and disorganized! He needed someone to help him!

GET A JOB

Two important applications should be made. First, **before Adam got married, he had a job**. Young men, before you even start dating or thinking about marriage, you ought to have a **pathway for a job** that can support a wife and children. Don't stir up your emotions with a girl, and then you have no way to support her so you have no way to get married. You will get into great trouble playing with marriage when you have no way to really support a wife and children. So you need to have a job.

BE ASLEEP IN GOD'S WILL

The second important observation here is that **Adam was busy doing his job**, and there was no one suitable for Adam **until God put him to sleep**. Young men and women who are seeking marriage, you need to be asleep in the will of God. That means while you need to trust God for a mate, and don't settle because you are desperate. Don't settle by marrying an unbeliever thinking you'll convert them. That's a really bad way to start a marriage.

Being asleep in God's will also means that **you are the person God wants you to be to attract** a mate. If you are worldly, you'll attract someone worldly. If you have weak and ungodly character, that's what you will attract. You are attracting misery. But if you are godly and radiant in Christ, you'll attract a godly, radiant potential mate.

2. THE WEDDING PARTICIPANTS (1:27)

Genesis 1:27 | So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

God is the Author of marriage. God creates a woman for the man. What is a woman? It's a biological female who has a womb. She is like Adam but very much not like Adam in some wonderful, amazing ways. A man is distinct from a woman. A man has the ability to reproduce, but not to carry a baby. The woman can carry a baby. A man, no matter what the junk science tells you, a man cannot and has never given birth to a baby. Only a woman can give birth.

DISTINCTIONS IN GENDER

In the goodness of God's design, Genesis 2:25 describes how Adam and Eve were fully at home with God and with one another, while also being perfectly comfortable in their God-given, gendered bodies. They were very different from one another, and they were not ashamed or discontented with their bodies. They were happy with their bodies.

Genesis 2:25 | And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

There was no gender dysphoria, no internal conflict, and no discontentment with the way God had made them. There are only two genders according to the Bible: male and female. **Boys will always be boys and girls will always be girls.**

³ Ibid.

Men and women are different genetically, socially, physically, emotionally, and sexually.

Men and Women are Genetically Different

Men and women are created differently in every cell of their bodies. Biologically, it goes far beyond X and Y chromosomes. In fact, **a full third of our genome functions very differently** in men and women.⁴

Men and Women are Socially Different

Women are sociologically generally **more vulnerable** than men and most of the time take on nurturing roles. **Men** because they are **physically stronger** **are more often in protecting roles**. This isn't to say women aren't protecting, but in marriage, it is right that men protect the house and that men put women and children first in a life raft, etc. It's also not to say men are not to be tender and nurturing, they most certainly should, but it is not their primary role in the home.

Socially men tend to be leaders and women tend to be helpers according to the way God has designed us. Within gender equality, there are clear biological differences between men and women that result in general sociological differences. Men tend to be more interested in tasks and things while women are more interested in people. Men tend to be more independent, and women tend to be more agreeable.

Men and Women are Physically Different

Physically, men are **generally much stronger than women**. For example, sports programs and provided for different genders (i.e., NBA vs. WNBA). Military special ops are exclusively male because of the physical demand. There is not equality in physical strength between the genders. Professional women in sports have over and over said it would not even be close to fair to compete against men are so much stronger than women.

Men and Women are Emotionally Different

Women are generally **emotionally more vulnerable than men** not because they are weaker, but because they **care and connect more due to their nurturing nature**. Women are connectors. Men tend to be able to disconnect for periods of time to focus on an overarching goal.

Men and Women are Sexually Different

Procreation is a key part of the flourishing of the human race and **the “plumbing” of men and women are distinctly different**. Our sexual maleness or femaleness— is an essential part of our God-given identity, whether we're married or not. **Your sexuality is rooted in your biological and anatomical identity**. More than that, it's rooted — as we are discovering more and more every day in sociological and psychological research — in the distinct workings of the male and female brain, and the psychological out-workings of those distinctions.

So men and women are distinct. God is so good in creating us male in female. But we are also complementary.

⁴ Moran Gershoni, and Shmuel Pietrokovski, *The Landscape of Sex-Differential Transcriptome and its Consequent Selection in Human Adults*. BMC Biol 15, 7 (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12915-017-0352-z>.

COMPLEMENTARY IN GENDER

Genesis 2:18 | It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.

Men and women are different but complementary. **Complementary roles of men and women were established BEFORE the fall.** God's calling for humanity is to image him by bringing human flourishing to the world. That glorious flourishing is impossible without men and women working together and complementing each other.

This is especially **seen in marriage where the man is to lead, and the woman is to support that leadership.** Godly leadership is **servant-leadership** where the husband listens to and serves the wife like Jesus did. As men we use our masculinity to serve and protect women. Women use their femininity to nurture and support men. **JESUS is the most powerful being in the universe**—he has infinite power, and he **uses that power to serve and protect.** Remember Jesus words.

Matthew 20:28 | The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

3. THE WEDDING CEREMONY (2:21-25)

Now, finally, we come to the first wedding ceremony.

THE OFFICIANT OF MARRIAGE

Genesis 2:21 | 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.

Marriage is God's idea. God was the one who gave the first bride away to the first man Adam. The first marriage occurred with God himself officiating. **He pronounced them man and wife.** He said this man and this wife are “one flesh” (2:24)!

A SLEEPY GROOM

Genesis 2:21 | 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.

God put Adam to sleep. It wasn't his to fret about his loneliness problem. God put him to sleep, and God went to work. **Jim Elliot** (missionary martyr to the Huaorani people) wrote:

“No one warns young people to follow Adam's example. He waited until God saw his need. Then God made Adam sleep, prepared for his mate, and brought her to him. We need more of this 'being asleep' in the will of God. Then we can receive what he brings us in his own time, if at all. Instead, we are set as bloodhounds after a partner, considering everyone we see until our minds are so concerned with the sex problem that we can talk of nothing else when chat-session time comes around. It is true that a fellow cannot ignore women—but he can think of them as he ought—as sisters.”⁵

As single people, you ought to be “asleep in the will of God” trusting God to bring you the right mate.

⁵ Elisabeth Elliot, *Shadow of the Almighty: The Life and Testament of Jim Elliot* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008), 62.

A HELPFUL BRIDE

Genesis 2:22 | And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.

The word “helper” in Genesis 2:18 and implied here is **not meant to be a term that is less** than man. God is our helper. The Holy Spirit is called our Helper. **Men need help!** Puritan Matthew Henry said it well.

The woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam; not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal to him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved.⁶

God made the woman that Adam needed. And God will bring you the woman that you need, not in pursuit of happiness, but in pursuit of holiness. God will bring you an “adversarial equal” to help you be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.

THE SONG OF MARRIAGE

Genesis 2:23 | 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.”

Adam opened his eyes at last to gaze into the face of the woman God had created especially for him.⁷ **Adam was so happy; it seems he composes a joyful song.** Can you hear him singing? “**At last!**” “**Bone of my bones** and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman” (2:23). To God be the glory for all that he has done in joining Adam to his wife!

ADAM CANNOT DO IT ALONE

in Genesis 1, humankind is given a mission to spread God’s image over all of creation by having kids, flourishing with family, flourishing with God-honoring and God-reflecting work. Adam **cannot fulfill this mission by himself.** Now that he has Eve, that’s **something to sing about!**

THE DEFINITION OF MARRIAGE

Genesis 2:24 | Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

This is the passage in the torah that Jesus goes to when he defines God’s original intentions for marriage.

Mark 10:6-9 | From the beginning of creation, “God made them male and female.”⁷ “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife,⁸ and the two shall become one flesh.” So they are no longer two but one flesh.⁹ What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.

Jesus gives us the definition of marriage from when he created man on the sixth day. Notice something so simple: since God is the author of marriage, he is the only one who has the authority to define marriage.

As first described in Genesis and later affirmed by Jesus:

⁶ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible: One Volume Edition*, ed. Leslie F. Church (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1961), 7.

⁷ John Phillips, *Exploring Genesis: An Expository Commentary*, The John Phillips Commentary Series (Kregel Publications; WORDsearch Corp., 2009), Ge 2:22b–25.

Marriage is a God-ordained, covenant relationship between a man and a woman. This lifelong, sexually exclusive relationship brings children into the world and thus sustains the stewardship of the earth. Biblical marriage — marked by faithfulness, sacrificial love, and joy — displays the relationship between God and his people.⁸

God designed marriage. God took woman from the flesh of man and literally spoke marriage into existence. It is in these verses that God pronounces Adam and Eve man and wife. He calls them into the one flesh relationship.

God designed marriage to be **between one man and one woman for their entire lives**. This shouldn't need to be said, it is so obvious, but when God wanted to bring man into a marital relationship, he created a woman. He did not create another man, or two women, or anything else. He created man and woman and pronounced them man and wife for life! This should be an elementary principle, but when people reject God, they become “vain in their imaginations and their foolish heart is darkened” (Rom 1:21).

Marriage is a **lifelong, sexually exclusive relationship, normally meant to bring human flourishing through children**. Children are a gift and inheritance from the Lord. **Children are not meant to be discarded but protected from the womb**. While not all couples can conceive children, when children are conceived, they flourish best in the nuclear family with father and mother. For so many mothers and children without a father in the home, the church should protect and support fatherless children and their single mothers, encouraging marriage when possible and appropriate.

Humans **cannot improve upon God's own definition of marriage**. God is the author of the marriage covenant. He instituted it. It was made in Paradise, and he alone defines it. As creatures on this earth, we do not need to come up with our own definition of marriage. Nothing in the United States Supreme Court's *Obergefell v. Hodges* opinion changes the truth about marriage. What has changed is the legal definition of marriage in the U.S., which is now at variance with the historic biblical faith as it has been affirmed across the centuries and as it is embraced today by nearly two billion Christians in every nation on earth.⁹ God has already given us a definition of marriage. Jesus says of the newly married man and woman in Mark 10:9, “What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.” What God has put together, we do not need to tear down and redefine! Yet our country is tearing the fabric of our society apart.

THE CONSUMMATION OF MARRIAGE

Genesis 2:24-25 | 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.

A new home established. “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife” (2:24a). They leave their parents and establish a new home.

Adam and Eve agree to their marriage vows. “Will you establish a new home and cleave to one another?” “I do,” they affirm. **Children are to leave their parents' home and begin a new household, cleaving to their spouse**. Leaving and cleaving doesn't mean that there aren't close family relationships between parents and children, but **the relationship has changed**. They are no longer living under the authority of father and mother but are still to honor them and enjoy the multi-generational blessing of a godly example and a place of foundational support and encouragement.

⁸ *Theology of Sex* (Washington, DC: National Association of Evangelicals, 2012), 10.

⁹ “God Defined Marriage,” (Washington, DC: National Association of Evangelicals, July 28, 2022), <https://www.nae.org/god-defined-marriage/>.

A new relationship established. “**And they shall become one flesh**” (2:24b). The one flesh relationship of sexual union is meant to be until death. Jesus said, “What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate” (Mk 10:9).

This means that God ordains and commands married people to be intimate and procreate within marriage. Sex is not an option in marriage. **Married people are not to use sex as a bargaining chip**, but to give of themselves freely to one another to satisfy one another and thereby **avoid temptation to sexual immorality** (cf 1 Cor 7:1-5).

A chaste dignity established. We find that Adam and his wife were “naked and not ashamed” (2:25). This is the virtue of marriage. **God created romance to demonstrate the ultimate love story** that God loves us and gave his Son to lay his life down for his bride.

4. A WEDDING THAT IS PRO-MOTHERHOOD (1:27-28)

Here we need to go back to the parallel passage in Genesis 1 to see that God is for mothers. He wants all of us to be pro-motherhood. God wants married people to have lots of children, if they are able. This is **his first command to the married couple**.

Genesis 1:27-28a | 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.”

Today is mother’s day, and we want to praise God for mothers. Part of married people’s responsibility is that we are to be fruitful and multiply if we are able. That’s God’s very first command to the newly married couple! **“Be fruitful and multiply!”**

Whether a person is single or married, we should all support the nuclear family of mother and father with children if possible since we all came from a nuclear family, and this is God’s design for human flourishing. One of God’s purposes for marriage is procreation. God is the one who is responsible for the family; it’s his idea.

Motherhood promotes biblical marriage. This means **marriage is between one man and one woman for life**. God placed a man and a woman in the garden to procreate.

Only a man and a woman together have the ability to pro-create. God wants parents to have children and flourish on the earth.

Motherhood promotes multi-generational godliness. Procreation affects the culture, not merely by sheer numbers, but by the **influence of godliness**. This is not just a command to procreate but to **promote multi-generational godliness**. We are called to pass the faith of Christ down to the next generation, so that hundreds of years from now, our children’s children will be serving God. Yet Americans are having fewer kids, and professing Christians are no exception.

Promotes societal flourishing. If anyone in our country wants to be strong and win the culture wars, then **he who has the most children wins**. Societal flourishing occurs as godly people have godly children. According to Christianity Today, America’s overall fertility rate has been about 1.7 births per woman, which is not a replacement level. Japan’s for example is right now at 1.34 births per woman and almost 40% of the population is over 60¹⁰. For conservative Protestants, including Evangelicals, the number used to **significantly higher, at 2.7**. Today, that

¹⁰ Statistics Bureau of Japan, “Chapter 2: Population and Households” from *Japan Statistical Yearbook* (Tokyo: Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication, 2020), <https://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/nenkan/1431-02.htm/>.

has dropped to 2.3.¹¹ Dear friends, the way we conquer the culture is by raising up godly children in godly homes. We are called to have children if we are married and able to have children.

One purpose of God making humanity male and female and having them marry is for procreation. The Bible still tells us about how blessed it is to have children! The prophet Malachi speaks of this very verse.

Malachi 2:15 | Did he not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union? And what was the one God seeking? Godly offspring. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth.

To raise up godly children from the marriage union is a key element of God's call for human flourishing. For this to take place, husband and wife must be devoted to help and care for one another. We must better ourselves, that we may day by day be kinder and gentler to one another. The reason is that when the marriage flourishes, the children flourish, and the society flourishes. Only when both parents remain faithful to their marriage vows can the children be given the security which provides the basis for godly living. The family was intended to be the school in which God's way of life was practiced and learned.¹² **Young couples should want to have a good number of children.** This is the blessing and bounty of the Lord.

Psalms 127:3-5 | Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward. ⁴Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth.⁵ Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them!

Conclusion

We need to guard marriage today. "What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate" (Mk 10:9). We need to cherish motherhood!

JOHNNY: HAVING A WIFE

At Sunday school they were teaching how God created everything, including human beings. Little Johnny, a child in the kindergarten class, seemed especially intent when they told him **how Eve was created out of one of Adam's ribs**. Later in the week his mother noticed him lying down as though he were ill. He had a pain in his side. His mom asked, "Johnny, what's the matter?"

Johnny said, "I don't feel well, I think I'm having a wife."

While getting married doesn't happen that way anymore, marriage is something that is going to happen to most of us. Let us be committed to prayer and encouragement for our married couples. Let us honor our mothers. Mothers are the greatest missionaries in the world! **Happy Mother's Day!**

Benediction

Revelation 5:12-13 - Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing! ...To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!

¹¹ As quoted in Gene Veith, "Evangelicals' Birth Rate Is Now Nearly as Low as That of Secularists," *Cranach: The Blog of Veith* (Patheos, February 3, 2020), <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/geneveith/2020/02/evangelicals-birth-rate-is-now-nearly-as-low-as-that-of-secularists/>.

¹² Joyce G. Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 28, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1972), 240–241.