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God's Plan for Marriage

GENESIS 2:18-24

Introduction

1. Many of you in this room are presently married or have been married.
2. If you are a person here today who is a widow or widower, it is my prayer that the years which you and your spouse spent together were filled with many precious memories which still bring a smile to your face and joy to your heart.
3. If you are a couple who are in the golden years of your lives, it is my prayer that you still smile when your spouse walks into the room and that you are enjoying each moment which God grants you together.
4. If you are a couple in the process of raising your children, those of us who are older know what you are going through.
5. We also know that the strength of your marriage and your combined commitment to honor God before your children will pay great dividends in the years to come. Stay the course.
6. If you are a young couple just starting out or with small children, I want you to know that there will be ups and downs in the years ahead.
7. However, if you stand by your commitment to love and cherish one another until death parts you, one day when you are old and gray, you will look back and say to one another, "We made it! By God's grace, we made it!"
8. This morning, I want us to look back to God's institution of marriage in the beginning of creation and hopefully see the marvelous plan He put in place for men and women down through the ages.

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I. Something Is Not Good

A. GOD'S ASSESSMENT OF HIS CREATION

1. On the first day of creation, God said, “Let there be light” and “there was light.” (Genesis 1:3).
2. The next words we read are, “God saw that the light was good” (Genesis 1:4).
3. On the second day, with the creation of the sky to separate the waters above the earth from those on the earth and the appearance of dry land, God again declared it to be “good” (Genesis 1:6-10).
4. It was the same with days three, four and five — each day, God declared to be good (Genesis 1:12, 18, 25).
5. Genesis 1:1-31 is an overview of the six days of creation.
6. Throughout this account we see that everything was from God.
7. Everything He created, He declared to be good.
8. At the end of the sixth day, the whole of creation was declared to be “very good” (Genesis 1:31).
9. In Genesis 2:1-3, we find God having finished “all His work which He had done.”
10. He “ceased” or “rested” from His creative work on the seventh day, blessed it and sanctified it (Genesis 2:3).

Slide 3**B. MAN IS ALONE**

“Then the Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone.” (Genesis 2:18a, NASB95)

1. In Genesis 2:4, Moses pulls us back to the sixth day and what happened on that day.
2. In verse 7, we learn of how God “formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life” so that he became

“a living being” (*Genesis 2:7, NIV84*).

3. We also learn of the garden which God planted “toward the east, in Eden” and of how he placed the first man there (*Genesis 2:8*).

4. Moses also tells us of how God “took the man [Adam] and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it” (*Genesis 2:15*).

5. He reveals to us the command which God gave to that first man:

“From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.” (*Genesis 2:16–17, NASB95*)

6. To this point, God’s assessment of His creation has been that it is all “very good.”

7. Suddenly, however, He sees something which He says is “not good.”

“It is not good for the man to be alone” (*Genesis 2:18*).

8. Not only is there an absence of something good — there is a deficiency.

9. This is God’s observation — there is no indication that He consulted Adam.

10. It may be that Adam didn’t have any idea that it was not good to be alone.

11. He had around him every bountiful provision He could imagine:

a. More than enough good things to eat.

b. Every imaginable animal for him to enjoy and that perhaps enjoyed his presence.

12. Adam may not have realized that he was alone.

13. He didn’t say, “Lord, something is missing here.”

14. No, it was God who said that it wasn’t good for Adam to be alone.

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II. God’s Resolution Of The Problem

A. THE NEED OF A HELPER FOR ADAM

“I will make a helper suitable for him” (*Genesis 2:18b, NASB95*)

1. God’s plan was to make a helper suitable for Adam.
2. Some look at the word “helper” and demean or diminish the wife’s role within marriage.
3. They see her as being in a servile role to her husband — however, this is not the case.
4. On several occasions in the Old Testament, we find God being referred to as a “helper.”
 - a. When Moses named his second son, Eliezer, “My God is help,” he said, “The God of my father was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh.”” (*Exodus 18:4, NASB95*)
 - b. David wrote in Psalm 54:4, “Behold, God is my helper; The Lord is the sustainer of my soul.” (*Psalm 54:4, NASB95*)
 - c. Psalm 121 is a song of ascents meaning it was sung as the Jews went up to the Temple in Jerusalem to worship God:

“I will lift up my eyes to the mountains;
From where shall my help come?”
My help comes from the Lord,
Who made heaven and earth.”
(*Psalm 121:1-2, NASB95*)
 - d. In the middle of Psalm 146, we find the words . . .

“How blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob,
Whose hope is in the Lord his God,”
(*Psalm 146:5, NASB95*)
5. To say that God is our help certainly does not put Him in a servile role or lessen His importance in our lives.

B. SHE WAS TO BE SUITABLE FOR HIM

“I will make a helper suitable for him.” (*Genesis 2:18b, NASB95*)

1. She was complementary to Adam.
2. She was his corresponding counterpart.
3. She shared in Adam's nature which means that she too was created in the image of God.
4. Adam and the woman were matching opposites.
5. She would supply what was missing in Him.
6. What is it that God is teaching us here about marriage?
7. Men, He is teaching us that in our wives He has given us the help we need.
 - a. Someone who is like us and yet unlike us.
 - b. Someone whose corresponding differences make us complete for what God has for us to do.
8. When Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 11:9, “man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake” this is what he had in mind.
9. Our wives make it possible for us to do what we can never do alone.
10. To borrow a line from the animated feature, *Ice Age 2*, “she completes you.”

Slide 6**C. GOD'S PREPARATION OF ADAM FOR HIS BRIDE**

“Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.” (*Genesis 2:19–20, NASB95*)

1. Initially, God had named everything in His Creation.

“God called the light day, and the darkness He called night” (*Genesis 1:5*).

“God called the dry land earth, and the gathering of the waters He called seas” (*Genesis 1:10a*).

2. He did this because He was sovereign over His creation.
3. Now, however, He brings the various land animals, “every beast of the field and every bird of the sky,” to Adam for him to name.
4. This was no small task.
5. Adam didn’t just pull a name out of the air.
6. One commentator on this passage states that Adam’s naming of the animals was the result of “a deep and direct mental insight into the nature of the animals, which penetrated far deeper than the knowledge which come from simple reflecting.” (Keil & Delitzsch)
7. However, in the naming of all these animals Adam noticed that “there was not found a helper corresponding to him” (v. 20).
8. All of the animals had corresponding social companionship, something which he lacked.

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D. HIS PREPARATION OF ADAM’S BRIDE

“So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. The Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man” (*Genesis 2:21–22a, NASB95*)

1. God caused “a deep sleep to fall upon the man” (v. 21).
2. This was perhaps very much like the sedation many of us have experienced when we have undergone some form of surgery.
3. Like us, Adam was not aware of what God was doing — He didn’t see the process, only the results.
4. While Adam slept, God took from his side a rib and then closed up the skin

around the area.

- a. Did Adam live the rest of his life minus one rib?
 - b. Did God cause Adam's body to regenerate another rib?
 - ❑ We don't know. What we do know is that all men today have their full compliment of ribs!
5. One thing I would like for us to notice.
 6. Whereas man was created from the dust of the earth, woman was created from that which made up the man — his bone, his flesh, his DNA.
 7. Eve was the first person to be created from a living being.
 8. Because she came from Adam, she too perfectly bore the image of God.

“God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” (Genesis 1:27, NASB95)

9. Over three hundred years ago Matthew Henry, a minister in England, had this to say about God using a rib to fashion the first woman:

“. . . not made 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 with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved”

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E. HIS PRESENTATION TO ADAM OF HIS BRIDE

“The Lord God . . . brought her to the man. The man said, “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.”” (Genesis 2:22b–23, NASB95)

1. This first woman, Eve, was perfect in every way — perfect in body, perfect in soul, perfectly sinless.
2. Notice, that it was God who brought Eve to Adam — He as the Eternal Father gives away the bride.
3. What was Adam's response — pure joy!

“This is now bone of my bones,
And flesh of my flesh;

She shall be called Woman,
Because she was taken out of Man.”

(Genesis 2:23, NASB95)

4. In her, Adam saw a mirror of himself, with some very agreeable differences of course.
5. Adam had finally found his companion, his longed-for-love, his counterpart.
6. No longer was he alone.
7. Moses, writing about this almost 3,000 years later added, “For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.” (Genesis 2:24, NASB95)
8. Almost 1,500 years after Moses, Jesus quotes him and adds, “So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate” (Matthew 19:6)
9. Men, outside of God, our first attention, our first obligation, our first loyalty is always to our wives.
10. This leaving and cleaving is a public declaration in the sight of God.

Conclusion

1. This statement by Moses, which Jesus references in Matthew 19:5, is also quoted by the apostle Paul in Ephesians 5:31 where Paul has been giving instruction on how wives and husbands are to respond to each other.
2. Paul then adds this statement, “This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church” (Ephesians 5:32).

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3. Earlier, in Ephesians 5:25-27, Paul had referenced the church in this way:

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.” (Ephesians 5:25–27, NASB95)

4. One day, our Lord will present us, the church, to Himself.
5. Even as a bride walks down the aisle in a beautiful, white dress to symbolize the purity with which she presents herself to her husband, so we are to be holy and blameless on that day.
6. No one else can enter the presence of His Father.
7. Are you prepared to stand beside Him on that day?