

How God Created It

Genesis 2:18-25

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I heard a story of a little kindergarten girl who for the first time had just heard the story about Snow White. She could scarcely contain herself. She ran home excited to tell her mother. She told her mother about Prince Charming who arrived on a beautiful white horse and kissed Snow White back to life. Then the little girl asked her mother, "Do you know what happened then?" Her mommy said, "Yes, they lived happily ever after." The little girl, with a frown on her face replied, "No, they got married, that's what happened."

You know, a lot of people think that marriage and "happily ever after" don't really go together. We live in a world today where marriage has lost its meaning. It has actually lost its definition. So, I want to look at the Bible with you, God's Word, to discover what it has to say about the topic of marriage. In Matthew 19, the pharisees came to Jesus tempting Him. They said, "Is it lawful for man to divorce his wife for any reason?" We are going to be looking at that in depth, probably spend a whole evening on that subject. When Jesus answered them, He said these words, "Have you not read?" Take note of that. When they came to Jesus with a question about marriage and divorce, where did Jesus direct their attention? To the Bible, God's Word. The scriptures that He quoted were the ones we're going to read tonight from the book of Genesis. "Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?" So, Jesus went all the way back to the book of "Beginnings" which was written by Moses, and He established God's foundation for marriage. It's the book of "Beginnings."

Now, how did God create marriage? This is such an important passage. I want you to pay close attention. Beginning in Genesis 2:18, "And the LORD God said," I want you to notice that right off the bat, God is speaking. All the way through the Bible, you find this repeated phrase, the LORD God said or thus saith the Lord. So either God is speaking or He's not. Either the Bible is true, because it comes from the God of truth, or it's not. "The LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." Or, I will make a helper suitable for him. "And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh instead thereof." By the way, I believe that this is history. I believe that this is an actual historic event. This isn't fairy tale or allegory, this is true history recorded by Moses given under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. God gave this to him. "And Adam said..." when God brought the woman to the man, "She shall be called Woman," verse 23, and Adam said, "Bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore..." This is the classic

passage, Moses' commentary on what God had said, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed..." because sin had not yet entered into the world, so they were both naked and were not ashamed. Now in verses 18-25, the passage that we just read, the classic passage that is the foundation for all the Bible's teaching on marriage and the foundation for all human society, we need to establish very clearly that marriage is God's idea. Before government, before the church, before any other human institution, God created marriage. It is a divine institution. We are going to break that all down for you tonight. God's idea, marriage, not man's, and because it is God's idea, it is not open for redefinition. We can't change the meaning of marriage when God is the one who created it. God is the one who designed it. It was His idea to begin with. The Bible is God's instruction manual.

I don't know why men have such a hard time reading instructions when they put something together. You know, it's just that macho kind of a thing, "I don't need instructions, this is easy." I resort to just looking at the picture on the box, you know. I get mad because the picture on the box doesn't look like the parts in the box and it won't go together. I get in the flesh and start talking about the people who designed it, and I have things to say about them. It's just like, "Dodo bird, read the instructions!" Step by step, go through the instruction manual and everything will fall into place. The Bible is God's instruction manual not only for salvation and how to get to heaven, but also for marriage, parenting and for all of life. The Bible is given as all things that pertain to life and godliness. If you want to have a blessed life, if you want to have a blessed marriage, then consult the owner's manual, the manufacturer's instructions. I can't believe how messed up people get their lives by simply not obeying God's Word. My heart goes out to those that have never been taught God's Word. They don't know God's Word, and they get married with no concept of marriage, and perhaps the marriage ends in divorce with heartache and misery. Then, later in life they find out what God has to say and realize that they made so many mistakes. I will say this, and I'm going to talk about divorce in a few weeks, divorce is not an unpardonable sin. Although God hates divorce, He loves divorced people. You got that? God loves you, and God does forgive our sins. Many times people don't want to get a divorce, it's not their desire and they are the innocent party, but the other person wants that divorce. So, it's a difficult thing. If we would simply, from an early age, know God's instructions, follow and obey it, we would save ourselves of so many heartaches and misery later on in life.

I want you to notice Adam's almost perfect world, verses 18-20. Now I say "almost perfect" because it says in verse 18 that, "the LORD God said..." Yehovah elohiym said, "It is not good that the man should be alone..." Now, after He makes the woman, and He brings her to the man, God says this, Genesis 1:31, "God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day." Now, I happen to believe that God created everything in six literal, 24-hour days, and on the seventh day God rested. There is not a smattering of indication in the text of evolution. I don't believe in theistic evolution. I don't believe in atheistic evolution. I don't believe in evolution, period. I believe in species changing within their own species, but I don't think that fish will ever become a German

Shepherd. Nobody has observed that, and I don't think that anyone ever will. Some of the problems that we have in marriage today are the result of our thinking in evolutionary terms; that we're evolving, we're progressing, that we've learned more, we've developed. A lot of the problems in distinguishing between the sexes today, the neuter gender concept, is because of our ideas of evolution not realizing that God created man and woman, or male and female, and He created them in His image. Both are made in the image of God. We get that very clearly in this text. They are not the product of some evolutionary process. After each day, God saw what He created and said it was good.

Another point I want to make before I forget, all the way through this creation passage, chapters 1 and 2, you find the phrases, "God said," "God made," "God formed," "God created," so all the way through it is God, God, God, God. This is all the work of God. Do you know that before anything else existed, God existed? So anybody that wants to argue with God and say, "That's not fair! Who do you think you are?" He was here first. He was here long before anyone was ever here. You ask, "Well, who made God?" No one made God. He's eternal. You say, "Well, I don't understand that?" Welcome to the club. Isn't God amazing? I'm glad I don't understand that. If He were small enough for my brain, He wouldn't be big enough for my needs. You either believe in an eternal God or you believe in some form of eternal matter. I choose to believe in an eternal God. I think there is good evidence to support that. God created, God spoke, God caused the sleep to fall upon Adam, God took his rib, God made the woman, God brought the woman to the man. It is all the work of God. Isn't God amazing! God just spoke it into existence.

God didn't just speak Adam and Eve into existence, though. He created man from the dirt. You guys are just a bunch of dirt clods. And then having made man, she's kind of twice removed, He took from Adam's rib and made the woman. Someone said after God made Adam He said, "I can do better than that," and He made Eve. Now that's not in the Scripture, but the Bible does not indicate in any way that man intrinsically is superior to women. He does say in the New Testament, and we're going to see based on this passage, that man was created first, then the woman or Eve, and the idea is that the man then becomes the head of the woman. We will see that as we get into tonight and next week, how Satan corrupted the marriage design.

God says in verse 18, "It is not good." What is not good? Man's aloneness. In what sense was man alone? There were animals, and God brought the animals. God formed every beast of the field and the fowl of the air, verse 19, and He "brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them..." It took intelligence and some time to do that, in that whatever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. Some say, I don't know if it's true, that perhaps Adam was just naming the animals that were there in the immediate vicinity of the garden of Eden, but certainly God gave Adam dominion over the animals and over the earth. So, "Adam gave names (verse 20) to all the cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field..." and then it comes back to the point, "but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him." So, Adam was not really alone; there was God and there were the animals. Now I want you to think for a minute, Adam had to look up to God. He was his creator. Then, Adam looked down upon the animals. They were creatures. When Adam looked around, there was no

compatibility with those animals. There was no “soulmate” so to speak or helper that was suitable for him. There was no counterpart spiritually, socially, emotionally and physically for Adam. So, God’s solution to man’s aloneness, and some feel that God actually had Adam go through the process of naming all the animals so that Adam would become aware that he needed a wife. I kind of like that idea. You have to think about it, Adam is thinking, “Man, this is awesome! Fruit everywhere, a beautiful garden, the temperature was just right, animals.” He had the biggest bunch of pets you could ever imagine. They were friendly. He could ride on lions, he could pet giraffes, and he could go do whatever he wanted. He had all these animals and he was thinking, “Man, this is amazing, the garden of Eden!” But, for Adam there was not found a helper that was suitable for him, so God has a solution in verse 18. “I will make him a helper suitable for him.”

Some people object to this concept that the woman was made to help the man. I believe that the man needed help. God says, “It is good, it is good, it is good,” and He looks at man and says, “Not good.” I say that humorously, but the real focus in “not good” is his aloneness. What God made was good, and I think Adam had an amazing physique, he was good looking, he was a perfect man. No sin. When Eve was made, she was amazing too. There was no sin. There was no degeneration of sin in either one of them yet, so they were perfect human beings. But, Adam didn’t have a suitable helper. He didn’t have a companion, a soulmate. So God says, “I have a solution. I will make a helper.” You need to understand the concept of a helper suitable for him means someone to complete him, someone to fulfill him. So the word “helper” is interesting. It is used in Psalm 46 to describe God Himself, who is described as a very present help in time of trouble. So, ladies don’t bemoan your position as a helper to your husband. It is a glorious thing! God is our helper, so in a sense you’re like God. You are there to help and fulfill your husband. Wives are their husband’s helper. Socrates once advised a young man, he said, “By all means, get married. If you have a good wife you’ll be happy. If you have a bad one, you’ll become a philosopher.” So I believe that a good wife can help a man and can fulfill a man.

So what does God do? He does just what He said He would do. Here comes the bride, verse 21 and 23. It says, “the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam...” He performed the first surgery. He put Adam out. Adam goes to sleep. He takes a nap. It says that, “...he took one of his ribs...” and the foolish idea that men perhaps have one rib less than women is nonsense because when Adam had children or a son, they had all the ribs they were supposed to, but Adam’s rib was removed by God. God used that to create the woman. He didn’t speak man into existence just by His word, He created him from the ground. And, He didn’t speak woman into existence by just speaking, He created her from man. So, the woman came from the man, but the New Testament argues that all men come from women. So this indicates that there is an inner dependence. So, yes the first woman came from the man, but every man living in the world today came from the womb of a woman, right? It’s kind of foolish for men to hate women. You came from a woman, Dude! You wouldn’t be here if there weren’t women. So, God makes this helper suitable for him.

Now, the bride is brought. God put Adam and Eve together. I love it in verse 22, “And the rib,

which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man." So the woman was God's gift to the man, and it was God who performed the first wedding. God was the one who first walked the bride down the aisle and gave the bride away. Now, I'm a father of three daughters. I know what it's like to give your daughter away. It was one of the hardest things that I have ever done. The morning of each one of my daughter's weddings I woke up crying like a little baby. I was just sobbing, and that was it. It was over. When the wedding came, I didn't cry. I was pretty macho through the whole thing, you know. But, I woke up and I could see each one of my girls on the day of their wedding, I could see them with their pigtails and swinging in the backyard, and running up to me, "Daddy, Daddy!" Now, I'm going to walk them down the aisle and put them in the hands of another man. That's a frightening thought! Frightening thought! Thank God I have three godly son in laws. All three love the Lord Jesus Christ and they love their wives. We're just so blessed in that.

In Proverbs 18:22 it says, "He who finds a wife, finds a good thing (underline that) and obtains favor from the Lord." A couple of days before I was going to get married, I was with a friend. He had another friend with him, this friend was not a Christian, and my friend points to me and says, "He's going to get married in a couple of days." This dude looks at me and says, "What would you want to go and do that for?" He had the mentality that you can't get married and be happy, you know. That's why they call it "wedlock" where you don't want to be in bondage. But I found a good thing when I got married, and I have obtained favor from the Lord. God has given me an amazing wife for which I am eternally grateful for the blessing that she is. So, when you find a wife, you find a good thing. Some say, "But, what if I married the wrong person?" I will talk more about this later, but we have this idea today that we have to marry the perfect soulmate. It ain't going to happen! Anyone who has been married for more than a couple of years say, "Amen." That doesn't mean that you can't get along and love your wife. Remember when there were stars in your eyes when you were dating. You were so excited, and everything was perfect. They could do nothing wrong. Then, you get married. You go, "Whoa! The dude snores!" I'll stop right there. Man, you get to know that person, and you start to rub each other and press on each other, that's one of the purposes of marriage. Grow up.

You know, a lot of people, especially the guys, need domesticating. They do. Before I got married, I could live on chocolate cake for breakfast, lunch and dinner for weeks. One big chocolate cake and I'm fine for a couple of weeks. Then you get married, "Why do we need to go to the grocery store? We have cake. We have some candy bars. Why do we need an oven? Why do we need a refrigerator?" Guys need domesticating. I actually believe that marriage domesticates men. They need domesticating. I believe that marriage can be used to mature women and help both men and women to die to themselves and commit to the covenant of marriage realizing that it is not a consumer relationship, that it is a covenant relationship. I will describe the difference in just a moment. So you might say, "Well, I married the wrong person." Well, if you treat them like the right person, you will find out that you did marry the right person to begin with because God is going to change them. So, you don't go into the marriage saying, "They're all messed up. They're kind of tweaked, but I'll fix 'em." People say, "You know, I want to find somebody to marry that just accepts me the way that I am." That's not a good idea either because you're messed up. You need help. Again, if you

have a spouse that tells it like it is, that tells you the truth or tells you that you need to get your act together, thank God for that spouse, that they don't put up with stupidity. When you see that you're in a covenant relationship, you don't bail out, you don't give up. If you're just living together, you bail out. That's a consumer mentality. You know, "I don't like the goods anymore. I don't like the product anymore. I'm going to go find something else that I like better." But a covenant is a commitment for life, and we need to understand that.

Now, we need to understand that marriage is created and designed by God. I found out today, this is a very interesting thought, that the first recorded words of any human being in the book of Genesis are Adam's words, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman..." which is two Hebrew words, one word for man and woman put together, woman. The first words recorded in the Bible by any human being are Adam's when he wakes up from a nap and finds out he's married. He had been looking at animals all day, so he was stoked when he saw Eve. He thought, "Wow! This is much better than the aardvark! This is way better than the porcupine!" He was absolutely excited. So, God made marriage. Now, someone has said, and the origin of this statement is a little obscure I think it goes back to the writings of the rabbi's and not Matthew Henry, that the woman was made not from men's head for him to be over her; not from his feet, for him to walk upon her; but the woman was made from man's side, to be his companion. I like that—to be close to his side, to be protected and provided for, to be a companion and to be sheltered. Not to be above her, not to walk upon her, but actually to keep her close to his side.

Now, verses 24-25 are the great classic passages on marriage. They are repeated in the New Testament, as I have already quoted, by Jesus in Matthew 19 and by Paul in Ephesians 5. In these verses (verses 24 and 25), I want to point out four building blocks and foundation for marriage. Now, these are basic. They are elementary. You have heard them before, but they are not unimportant. I want you to listen very carefully and we will rap up this first time together. The first building block, which forms the foundation for marriage, is severance (verse 24). "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother..." That's what we call severance. Adam and Eve had no parents. This is Moses giving a commentary on the historical narrative. Moses is writing these words. God had been speaking, then Adam was speaking, and now Moses is writing his commentary. So, these words aren't necessarily for Adam and Eve, they are for us who follow. In all marriages that follow, a man will leave his father and his mother and cleave to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

What does it mean to leave your parents? Well, it doesn't mean that you have to abandon them or forsake them. I have done a lot of weddings where I have seen people give roses to their parents, kiss and hug them and say goodbye. It doesn't mean, "Nice knowing you. I'll never see you again." Nor does it mean that you must move far away. You can live with your parents, but I don't recommend it. I have had young couples, "Oh, it's so great! We're getting married. It's gonna be really great! We are going to move in with my parents." I'm thinking, "Oh, Lord have mercy!" Not a good idea! I know that sometimes necessity requires that for a time, and I love my in-laws, my wife's parents, but we had to move out of our house for a couple of days once because it got flooded. Man, I was like, "Lord, please deliver me. Please take me home!"

I was praying for the rapture after a couple of days. You know, man's home is his castle. I want to be home with my wife, you know? So, I meet these young couples who just want to live with their parents and think it's going to be really cool. Well, be very careful. To leave your father and mother means that your relationship with them does radically change once you get married.

Lest I forget, the husband-wife relationship is the tightest, closest, most permanent bond on planet earth. Now, I know you love your children. I know that mothers feel that motherly instinct, and they came from your womb and all that stuff, but there is no closer relationship on planet earth than the husband-wife relationship. That is why a married couple should never let anyone else come into that relationship. The two become one. You should never let your parents divide or come between you. You should never let friends come between and divide you. You should never let another man, for you wives, come between you or another woman, for you husbands, come between you. It is the closest bond because children will leave and cleave to their own spouses and you are there without them. My wife and I were married before we had children. Children were the fruit of the marriage, and Lord willing, we go on being married long after the children are gone. It's sad that many people, once they become empty nesters, no longer have anything going in the marriage and when the kids are gone their marriage dissolves and falls apart. It's a permanent bond. We are going to see that. Here's really what it means, it means that you are more concerned about your mate's ideas, opinions and practices or concerns than those of your parents. It means that you are not really dependent upon your parent's affection, approval, assistance or counsel. Your spouse becomes the priority. Your spouse becomes the priority. I have seen many times in marriage counseling that either the husband is too attached to his mother or the wife is too attached to her mother, usually it's a mother issue. It divides them, and they fight over that in-law problem. A couple should never allow that to happen. The priority should always be your spouse. You must not try to change your mate simply because your parents do not like them. You must make your husband-wife relationship the priority. It is a priority human relationship. I would summarize this by saying that it is allegiance and dependence. You pledge allegiance to your spouse and you are committed to them, severance.

The second key word for the foundation is permanence. In Genesis 2:24, "...cleave unto his wife..." Now the English word cleave doesn't really convey the Hebrew in that in the Hebrew it means "stick to." That's why in some English translations it says "glued to." You can take two pieces of wood and glue or laminate them together, and they can become stronger than one piece of wood. Two pieces of wood glued together can be stronger than one piece. The Bible says a threefold cord is not easily broken; husband, wife and God in the middle of that relationship. So God actually glues you together. The concept behind this in what is conveyed, is permanency. We're going to look at what I believe to be the Biblical reasons for divorce and remarriage, but let me tell you what God's design, purpose and intent for marriage is... permanency.

I was once attending a wedding, not officiating, and I heard the vows. In their vows they said, "Love, cherish, sickness and health, as long as we both shall love." As long as we both shall love? "I don't love you anymore so I'm through with you." This is where I'm a traditionalist. I

love the traditional vows, "As long as we both shall live." You say, "That's pretty radical." You are right. That's why you better think about it, Buckeroo, when you get married because there ain't no going back. There ain't no bailing out. This is a commitment. This is what we don't like in our society and culture. We don't want a commitment. We don't want to be bound. We don't want to be locked in. We don't want permanency. People will say, I will develop this more over the next few weeks, but they say, "Why do we need a piece of paper?" Have you ever heard people say that? "Aw, marriage is just some institution. Why do we need a piece of paper. Why do we need to get married? Why do we need a marriage license? I love my partner, and I'm just going to live with them." What they are really saying is, "I don't love you enough to covenant with you or commit to you for life!" Let me say this too. If a guy or a gal is unwilling to marry you, you shouldn't be living with them. I'm going to point that out very clearly next Wednesday when we talk about how Satan has corrupted marriage.

One of the big problems today is cohabitation. It's not just same sex marriage or adultery or divorce, it is cohabitation. Marriage is a covenant relationship. It's not a consumer relationship. Marriage is a covenant—till death do us part. The whole passage here, when God brings the woman to the man, conveys the Hebrew concept of a covenant. A covenant was done before God and man. It was a public commitment. I believe the trend toward and some of the idea of just getting married in secret, or getting married privately, or running off and getting married is unfortunate because the idea is a public commitment before God and these witnesses. I pledge my love to you, and I think it should be a public commitment and a covenant.

Let me briefly describe the difference between our culture today having a consumer mentality for marriage. That would be like the relationship you have with your grocery store or some other vender. As long as they are providing you with a good product for a good price, you do business with them. The minute the product goes bad or the price is too much, I'm going to find a new place to buy my groceries, right? So people say, "Well, why do you need a marriage license?" Well, because I believe that the marriage license creates stability. I believe that it creates stability because you have a contract.

A covenant relationship is not like a vendor kind of relationship, you provide the product and as long as it meets my needs, I'll keep shopping at your store, but when you don't meet my needs I'm going to go somewhere else. A lot of people look at their relationships like that as opposed to a covenant relationship illustrated by parents and children. Do you ever think about this? When you become a parent, it is hard work! I mean you change diapers, and they stink, and it's a mess. They cry and you don't get any sleep. It's just difficult, but you don't bail out on them, right? Tragically, some people do. Today, that is not accepted by our culture, it's frowned upon by our culture. It's illegal to do that. You can't just dump your kids somewhere, they're your kid. You're responsible for them. You have a relationship to them. You pour in them, and even sometimes when your kids don't treat you the way they should, you're still their parent. You still love them. You still help and sacrifice for them. You don't just give up on them. "Oh, I'm sick of it! I divorce you!" Today we actually have children divorcing their parents! We even have a consumer mentality for kids. You don't like your parents, go find some better ones. It's insane! But in a covenant relationship it creates stability and intimacy. "How will it create intimacy?"

Because you have the security of marriage. In a consumer relationship, which is what happens when people just live together or are dating, you have to put on a good front and a good face. You have to perform and be razzamatazz because you don't want them to go somewhere else to shop. When you get married and there's a covenant relationship, you can relax. It's not like, "Hey, you're stuck with me! Take what you get!" At least there's that security that when this person finds out I'm not perfect, or this person finds out I do snore at night they aren't just going to bail on me because they've made a covenant. They aren't going to go find some groceries that are better and cheaper somewhere else. So, it's important that we understand that marriage is a contract. It's a covenant, a divine covenant between God and man. Someone said, "When I got married, I was looking for an ideal, then it became an ordeal, and now I want a new deal!" That's kind of the mentality that we have today when it comes to marriage. When Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ford were celebrating their golden wedding anniversary, they asked Mr. Ford, "What's the secret to 50 years of marriage?" He said, "The same policy I have for making cars, just stick to one model!" I like that. It's a commitment that you make to one another.

Jesus gave His commentary on this in Matthew 19:6, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Love is not a passing emotion, it's a continual devotion based on a commitment, not feelings. It's not just the animal attraction that we would have for other people. If we get married based on physical attraction, people change. It doesn't always work out that way. We have to have a deeper commitment. We have to have a love for God and a mutual commitment to God. I tell Christians, "Not only do you marry a Christian, but you marry a Christian that is equally committed and surrendered and obedient to the Lord." Do you know how many times I have had Christians in my office, "Well, he was a Christian. He came to church. He said he was a Christian..." "Well, did you make sure he was a real Christian? Did you make sure he was a committed Christian? Did you make sure he or she loved Jesus Christ with all their heart and all their soul and all their strength?" "Well, no. They had a Bible and it was a big one. It was genuine leather, I thought they were spiritual." What does that matter? "I saw him one time, months ago, he actually lifted his hands. It wasn't very high but he was lifting his hands, so I think he's really saved." I mean I've heard the stupidest stuff. Take some time to make sure, and take some time to make sure that if there is conflict, you can work it out. I meet young couples that say, "Oh, Pastor John, we want to get married." "Have you ever had an argument?" "Oh, no! We're in love! Oh, no! Why would you say that? We love each other! We never argue!" Go have a big fat argument, work it out, learn to forgive each other, then come back and see me and you'll get married because I can guarantee you, there is going to be a time when you don't see eye to eye. It may be just the way the toilet paper rolls off the wall. She wants it rolling down from underneath, you want it rolling from up top and you're ready to divorce over that. It's just crazy the things couples fight over. By the way, in a covenant relationship (I've seen, and I believe it with all my heart) people who will weather the storms end up having a good marriage and will look back and say, "Praise God that I didn't bail out on my marriage when the going got rough!" People who did bail out said, "What a foolish mistake I made that I didn't weather the storm and learn to die to myself, work on my marriage and make it a priority." I've never met anybody that said, "Man, I am so stupid to stay married. I should've got a divorce. I'm so dumb. I hung in there and endured the trial." There has never been anybody, but I've met a lot of people that said, "I'm stupid because I bailed out early. I

gave up.” Weather the storms and marriage can grow in love and intimacy, in deepness and harmony, and unity over all of the years that God will give you.

Here’s the third word, unity. It’s in verse 24. One flesh, unity. So there is severance, permanence and then unity, one flesh. This is not uniformity. This is unity. Donut shops have uniformity and cars are produced uniformly, but marriage is a unity. It means that there is diversity and yet harmony in that marriage relationship. At its most elementary level it refers to the sexual or physical union, and Lord willing, we are going to be spending a whole night on intimacy and marriage. Notice in verse 25, they were both naked and were not ashamed. Sex is God’s gift to the married. It is God’s blessing in the marriage relationship. Hebrews 13:4, “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.” It is more than just sharing our bodies or our beds, it is also sharing our possessions, our insights, our ideas, our feelings, our problems, our successes, our sufferings, our failures, our plans, our hopes. If you’re married, you should never be afraid to buy a house or a car in each other’s name or have joint bank accounts, those kinds of things, because what is mine is my wife’s and what is my wife’s is mine. Now you might have his or hers towels in the bathroom, I don’t think you’ll go to hell for that. That’s okay. You have to see that it no longer is just me, it’s us. You have to remember that when you give your time, when I commit myself to time, I need to check with my wife first. When I commit money, I need to check with my wife first. She has to check with me, and we work together. We have an understanding that it all belongs to each of us and we live for the Lord, serve the Lord, there’s no problem there. We trust each other. We talk about trust. We have this unity and intimacy that comes from this commitment of a covenant relationship of marriage. Without that so called, “piece of paper,” and I realize it’s just a piece of paper, but if you have the idea that marriage is just based on feelings or emotions, your marriage won’t last. Marriage is a covenant. It’s not a passing emotion, it’s a continual devotion seeking the highest good of the object love. Married people don’t wake up every morning, “I love you!” The birds are singing and the sun is glistening off the eggs. It just doesn’t work that way. I love that quote by Ruth Graham, the wife of Billy Graham the famous evangelist. She was asked, “Have you ever thought about divorcing Billy Graham?” She said, “No. I’ve thought about murder but never divorcing him. I’ve certainly wanted to kill the man, but I’ve never wanted to divorce him.” I don’t think that should even be a part of the Christian’s vocabulary. We don’t use the word. We don’t talk about the word. We never contemplate the concept. It should be eliminated from our vocabulary. Peter Marshall described marital harmony this way. He said, “Marriage is not a federation of two sovereign states, it’s a union; domestic, social, spiritual and physical. It’s a fusion of two hearts, the union of two lives, the coming together of two tributaries which after being joined in marriage will flow in the same channel, in the same direction, carrying the same burdens of responsibility and obligations.”

I won’t take much time here because we are going to study this in a few weeks, but I want to give you one last brick, the fourth brick, on the foundation for the essence or meaning of marriage and that is mystery. Ephesians 5:31-33, “For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.” Now, does that have a familiar ring? We just read it in Genesis. So we go back to the book of beginnings for

the foundation of marriage. What does Paul say about it in verse 32? "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband." So the last brick or building block is that the mystery of marriage pictures the relationship of Christ with His church. Now when Jesus Christ died on the cross for the church, was that a feel-good situation? Did He have an easy road? No. He sacrificed, He died, He lay down His life to purchase the bride. Now we become the bride of Christ, and Christ has entered into a covenant with the church. We drink the cup and eat the bread as a symbol of the body and blood of Christ as a covenant. He sacrificially gave His life. That's a model of marriage; sacrificial, self-denial, love in the covenant relationship of marriage that is permanent, intimate, and is a mystery that pictures God. Is it any surprise that marriage is under attack today by our ungodly, Christ-rejecting, God-hating culture that we live in? Marriage is a divine institution, and as goes marriage, so goes the state, the church and the world. I am extremely concerned for our country, the United States of America, because we cannot survive as a nation without Godly marriages. Godly marriages produce Godly people, and Godly people lead the nation. Presidents, senators, policemen, bankers, lawyers, car salesmen, you name it, everybody comes from a marriage relationship. That marriage relationship, if it's doing what God wants it to do, is producing Godly men and women to produce the next generation.

Marriage—a covenant for companionship, sexual intimacy, procreation and family. It teaches and changes us. It makes us a blessing. It reflects Christ and the church and brings glory and honor to God. Before there was any form of government, before there was any church, God created marriage; monogamous marriage, one man, one woman for life, a heterosexual monogamous relationship. One man, one woman, the two become one—that is marriage. We've seen even in the last few days in our own country the implications of taking a stand for that. We are already beginning to see people go to jail for their conviction of what they believe to be in marriage. It's going to affect the church, Christian ministries, all of our culture and society on what has been happening in the last few weeks and months in America, and in the last several years. So we need to uphold God's standard. Amen?