

Woman 9-10-06

Genesis 2:18-25 (NIV)

¹⁸ The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." ¹⁹ Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. ²⁰ So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam no suitable helper was found. ²¹ So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. ²² Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. ²³ The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." ²⁴ For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. ²⁵ The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

It just happens that this text has come up on Mariko and my 30th anniversary. I'll count that as a God incident, a confirmation of His blessing. It certainly isn't a blessing on my being a good husband, but on her being a good wife. I can certainly say it is not good for man to be alone. Married life teaches us to let go of our selfishness and consider someone other than our self. I think that is one reason that the Apostle Paul wrote that elders should be the husband of one wife. (1 Timothy 3:2) A married man must learn to put another first at times. He must learn how to deal gently and lovingly with another in all kinds of circumstances. (Ephesians 5:28) Marriage is a tool to help us mature spiritually.

¹⁸ The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." It is not good for the man to be alone. God said it! I believe it. I've experienced it. And yet that is what we men tend to do. If we didn't have a sex drive, I think most of us men would be hermits. Remember this statement came on the sixth day after pronouncing everything created as good. Now we have this one contrasting "not good", man being alone.

Put three women in a room, close the door, and in five minutes they'll know all about the others' families, work, and some of their gripes. Put three men in a room and in five minutes they'll be lucky to find out one another's names. In an unfamiliar setting, women will sit next to each other, but the men will sit as far away from anyone as they can. We want our space. When we are alone, we tend to focus on gratifying our selfish needs or wants. God knew exactly how He had designed Adam. He knew man was not designed to be alone. He knew exactly what Adam needed, *a helper suitable for him.*

With the feminist movement of our time, many would balk at this description of women, but it's the Creator's description. Just don't forget that, according to the first chapter, they are both, male and female, made in the image of God. (Genesis 1:27) That makes them equally priceless. They were to rule together over creation.

Commented [notes1]: Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,
1 Tim 3:2 (NIV)

Commented [notes2]: 28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.
Eph 5:28 (NIV)

Commented [notes3]: 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.
Gen 1:27 (NIV)

"Helper" cannot be a demeaning term in the economy of God, for He is referred to as "the helper of Israel". (Exodus 18:4; Deuteronomy 33:7; 1Samuel 7:12) Only our selfish carnal perspective sees "helper" in a derogatory sense.

She was to be suitable for him. The two Hebrew words translated into "helper suitable" are helper and opposite, or matching opposite. Together, these words imply something like "productive counterpart" or as we affectionately say, "better half". The word for helper also means one who aids in time of distress. This is what a man needs. He needs a woman that rounds him out – not because of all her good cooking – but who is gentle where he is firm, who thinks intuitively where he is analytical, a balance to what alone could be seen as extreme. Her differences complete him for the call of God on his life. Too often we look for someone just like us. That is because we're egocentric. God's design is someone very different to complete you. So don't whine about how your mate doesn't have the same likes. Instead, rejoice in the differences. The differences add to what you already have to make your life complete.

As humans, we are often clueless to the goodness of God. God didn't create Eve next. Instead, God gave Adam his first career as a taxonomist (one who categorizes and names). ¹⁹ *Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name.* JHWH Elohim had previously formed all creatures from the matter created on day one of creation. He gave Adam the privilege to name them all, at least the ones that were in the Garden. What is going on here? Why is God waiting to create what Adam needs to make him complete, and instead, having him name all these creatures? That would be a very time consuming task. In naming them, Adam must have looked at their characteristics, shape, sounds, color and maybe even habits. In the process, he had time to see that none of them complimented him in any way. He also saw that each one had its complement, its mate. None have the breath of God in their lungs. None could truly be a balance to his nature.

²⁰ *So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam no suitable helper was found.* God graciously let Adam consider what he needed and what did not meet that need. Then he was in a position to appreciate what he did need. (Adam and Eve joke) ²¹ *So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh.* ²² *Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.*

Here is Puritan Matthew Henry's often quoted note in regards to Eve being taken from Adam's side: "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." This was the first surgical operation in history, but it is much more than that. It is telling us that we cannot look upon the opposite sex as some other species. A popular book was titled Men are From Mars and Women are From Venus. We are different, but we are also very much the same. We are of the same material. We may have different drives, longings, and roles, but

Commented [notes4]: and the other was named Eliezer, for he said, "My father's God was my helper; he saved me from the sword of Pharaoh." Ex 18:4 (NIV)

Commented [notes5]: 7 And this he said about Judah: "Hear, O LORD, the cry of Judah; bring him to his people. With his own hands he defends his cause. Oh, be his help against his foes!" Deut 33:7 (NIV)

Commented [notes6]: 12 Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far has the LORD helped us." 1 Sam 7:12 (NIV)

we are really fundamentally the same. We are both made in the image of God. We both have a longing for the transcendent. We both long to be completed by our other half.

It is said that opposites attract. Considering that God made us to have what the other lacks, that should be true. So often though, those differences result in conflict. One great asset in any marriage is to appreciate the differences, the different point of view, the different skills, realizing that it is a part of God's plan to complete you and bring into your life what you are lacking. Celebrate your differences, don't criticize or stifle them.

The Apostle Paul does say that some have a special gift of singleness. (1Corinthians 7:1) I knew a young Chinese lady that once taught a class on the gift of being single. I was thinking about having her come and talk to the singles in the church, but then I discovered she had married. There are a few who by the grace of God are so in love with the Lord that they do not feel the driving need to be married. They devote themselves solely to the things of God. They are not distracted in that service to God by service to a spouse. (1Corinthians 7:34)

²³ *The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man."* This verse is another Hebrew poem. It is the oldest of all human quotes. Adam is still practicing his role as chief taxonomist. He takes one look at God's creation and says, "Woe Man!" Well, actually he said, *Ishshah!* The word *adam* means mankind. An individual man in Hebrew is *ish*. What Adam actually said was, "She shall be called 'the opposite of man!'" She was his complement, made of the same material.

Somewhere over the years an urban legend sprang up that man has one less rib than woman. I heard it taught when I was young and repeated it as fact. Truth is that you can go and count the bones on cadavers of men and woman and you will find the same count. The foolishness of the idea is evident when you think of the number of fingers on a baby born to a man who lost a finger in an accident. Would the baby have only four fingers on a hand? We must be careful when we quote other sources to check out the information ourselves. True science and true theology will not disagree. Truth is truth. Notice in our text it says nothing about the number of ribs that man or women will have. That isn't the point of the text. The point is that woman was made from man. As different as we are, we are of the same substance, *ish* and *ishshah!*

The feminist movement and our postmodern culture downplays man's role. It has even been suggested that woman is more evolutionarily advanced than man. That is as silly as saying men are short one rib. We are very different but not better or worse. We were made to be together. This was God's design. Jesus reiterated this in the New Testament. (Matthew 19:4-5) In the beginning God made them male and female. Male and female He created them. God acts intentionally and with future purpose. When we try to avoid His plan, we do so to our own detriment.

Commented [notes7]: 1 Now for the matters you wrote about: It is good for a man not to marry. 1 Cor 7:1 (NIV)

Commented [notes8]: 34 and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world--how she can please her husband. 1 Cor 7:34 (NIV)

Commented [notes9]: 4 "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' 5 and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh' ? Matt 19:4-5 (NIV)

²⁴ *For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.* For what reason does God say this? He says it because of the way He made us. Woman was taken out of man and made for man. They are meant to be one. So, when you marry, set aside your loyalty to mom and dad and be one with your spouse. Pastors and counselors refer to this as the "leave and cleave" passage. The **two** were meant to compliment each other, not three or four. They were to form new loyalties. This verse is so helpful in guiding us in God's intentions. God's intentions are always best for us. You have started an independent household. That is how it should remain.

So often, when a couple marries, one or the other or both will continue to go to their parents for opinions and advice. There is nothing wrong with doing that occasionally, as long as husband and wife agree to do so. The problem is when the marriage has too much outside interference. Instead of the two being one and complementing each other, there is a third or fourth factor involved keeping them from truly uniting as one. Every couple should make decisions on their own. Moms and Dads of married couples, if you love your son or daughter, don't nose into their business and make decisions for them. Let them come to conclusions together. Let them be their own household with their own traditions.

The Hebrew custom before and after Moses and even to the time of Jesus was that the extended family lived together. Leave was not interpreted as moving to another location, but a transferring of one's main loyalties. More couples fight over where they are going to spend the holidays, his parents or hers. I have a suggestion for you. Send her parents tickets to come to your Thanksgiving and his parents tickets to come to your Christmas and switch it around next year. Do your thing together as one. Make your own traditions.

²⁵ *The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.* Pastor Mislter suggests that they were clothed in glory. That is an interesting thought. In my humble opinion, because sin had not yet entered the world, they did not think of the body in any way other than what God intended. There was only love and not lust, and therefore there was no shame. It is when sin entered that man and woman saw the need to cover themselves from the lustful eyes of another. (2Timothy 2:22)

Christian men and women, can I speak from my heart to you on this matter? The world is dressing as if they had no shame. Instead of the common sense to cover one's self from lustful eyes, the intent today is to desire those lustful looks. We feel flattered when someone eyes us, when we should feel uncomfortable. That look is treating you as if you were an object of gratification, not an eternal soul. (Job 31:1)

Would you want to entice someone to rebel against God? Would you desire others to see you merely as an object? Then dress decently. Consider why you like certain clothes. If it is because they are revealing or enticing, I suggest you change your wardrobe. I'm not suggesting we go back to Victorian or prudish dress. You know when something crosses the line. Lovely and sexy are two different things. Can anyone say Amen? We live in a fallen world. Realize that as make your choice in clothing. Examine your heart as to why you would want to wear what you wear.

Commented [notes10]: 22 Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.
2 Tim 2:22 (NIV)

Commented [notes11]: 1 "I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl."
Job 31:1 (NIV)

God took care of the one thing that was not good in the Garden of Eden. He provided the suitable helper for Adam. Adam was no longer alone. He and his bride were one. Now, at the end of that day, God could say of it all, "It is very good!"

Something is missing in this message! It's the connection with Jesus Christ. Really it is quite obvious. The Apostle Paul tells us in Ephesians 5 that the love of a husband and wife is really a picture of Jesus and the church. (Ephesians 5:25) We are the bride of Christ. From what we have learned today, we should see that picture a little more clearly. (Ephesians 5:32) Will you be one with Him? Or is it good for you to be alone?

There are churches that try to get along without the presence of the husband. They just want to be an independent woman, making decision on their own, not wanting to be a helper. They would consider that degrading! They want to form their own independent perspective. (Ephesians 1:22) May we always be a church that insists on Christ's headship! Without Him we can only make mistakes.

To the transformed heart, renewed by the Spirit of God, there is no more delightful thought than being in some way a suitable helper to our Lord and Savior. When Jesus realized that all things were in His hands, do you remember what He did? He didn't say, "Who needs these weak willed disciples!" No, He took a towel and washed their feet. (John 13:3-4) He came not to be served but to serve. (Mark 10:45) And then He told us that we were to do the same for others. (John 13:15) Oh to be a suitable helper for the King of kings and Lord of lords!

We are certainly an opposite. He is everything we are not. Yet He wants to make us one with Himself. He doesn't want us to cling to our parents' faith. Even if they were Christians, we need our own relationship with Him. Its not good enough to be a friend of the bride, He wants you to be the bride. He made you in His image so that He could enter into a relationship with you. He doesn't desire anything else in all His creation. Only mankind was made in His image. (Genesis 1:27)

Just as Adam had a name for woman, God has a name for us. When He saw us, He called us the church, meaning His called out ones. We are those He called out of the world to be His suitable helpers. (John 15:19) How could we ever be a helper suitable for Jesus? It's only when He fills us with His Holy Spirit. (Acts 1:8) And just as He has so often helped us with grace and mercy and patient guidance, we can be His voice to others calling them to the high and holy calling of being a helper suitable to the most gracious and loving of all husbands.

We are only suitable when we are surrendered to His Holy Spirit. Are you? Have you entered that most holy of all relationships, a love relationship with Christ Jesus? Does your life reflect that? What a privilege to be called to serve the Great Servant!

Commented [notes12]: 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her
Eph 5:25 (NIV)

Commented [notes13]: 32 This is a profound mystery--but I am talking about Christ and the church.
Eph 5:32 (NIV)

Commented [notes14]: 22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church,
Eph 1:22 (NIV)

Commented [notes15]: 3 Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God;
4 so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist.
John 13:3-4 (NIV)

Commented [notes16]: 45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."
Mark 10:45 (NIV)

Commented [notes17]: 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.
John 13:15 (NIV)

Commented [notes18]: 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.
Gen 1:27 (NIV)

Commented [notes19]: 19 If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.
John 15:19 (NIV)

Commented [notes20]: 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."
Acts 1:8 (NIV)