

HERE COMES THE BRIDE

... a primer on marriage

Genesis 2

WEFC September 28, 2008

The universe is enormous. Earth, to us who live out most of our days in a few of its communities, is very large. There is no conceivable way that we can personally begin to fathom even a small percentage of the earth's amazingness – from the medical, to the chemical, to physics, to engineering ... and the impressive list appears to be unending.

Hanging around microscopes, working on motors, baking in kitchens ... all have their place, but behind all the hubbub there is a desire to connect with one another.

It is rather fascinating that **Genesis** narrows so quickly. The spectacular “universal studio” of God is not where God wants us to invest our attention.

Everything else is left in a blur, but the focus in the center of the picture is clear and sharp as the three key players stand out - God, Adam and Eve who is about to enter the stage.

There is nothing that thrills us more than a good relationship.

There is nothing that wipes us out more than a bad relationship.

Not one of us are immune to relationships.

We have to conclude that God has this as central ... and maybe that is why we love relationships so much, ... long for them, and why when they are not going well, we experience in our insides a downer.

These statements found here are so contemporary.

It is especially in our North American society that we have lost our way on realizing what is a male and what a female is.

The current WorldView has been so modified, revised, redefined that we would almost think that there is not distinction between a man and a woman.

Yet in the middle of all the confusion of who we are, men and women are asking old questions to which God has given good answers long ago.

Instead of accepting those answers they are trying to come up with their own insights. The result is that men and women are stepping on relationship landmines that leave them maimed, emotionally mangled, and deeply bitter about that which was intended to bring them encouragement.

The secular WorldView denies the Creator. The result is that gender is nothing more than the accidental byproduct of blind evolutionary process. Therefore, gender is reducible to nothing more than biology and, as the feminists famously argued, biology is not destiny.

If gender is nothing more than a biological accident, and if human being are therefore not morally bound to take gender as meaningful, then the radical gender theorists and homosexual rights advocates are correct after all.

For, if gender is merely incidental to our basic humanity, then we must be free to make whatever adjustments, alterations, or transformations in gender relationships any generation might desire or demand.

The postmodern worldview embraces the notion of gender as a social construct. That is, postmodernists argue that our notions of what it means to be male and female are entirely due to what

society has constructed as its theories of masculinity and femininity. (A Mohler Jr.)

Originally, God made things clear, but significantly different than where we find ourselves today.

What was given in **Genesis 2** is radically altered in **Genesis 3**, because of sin. We are forced to make adjustments ... downward, knowing of what could have been, but no longer is.

Genesis 2 gives us the original blueprints and first run regarding marriage.

We may see this as the ideal, but it is also the realistic ... again intensely practical.

Today we start and will come to a conclusion in a week or two down the road.

You may be young and marriage may not be something in your near future, listen, please, not to me, but to God's Word.

Whether you are old and have settled into a marriage where you are putting up with each other, may God give you a revived hope as you examine **Genesis 2**.

... or if you are not married, these principles transfer into friendships.

This is the framework in which our relational behavior finds its solid foundation.

Today we plod through the text of God's Word, laying down foundational truths that have been revealed to us ... so that our lives might match up to what God intended.

Begin please at **Genesis 2:18**

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.

The account in **Genesis 2** gives us additional information as to what happened on Day 6 of Creation.

Man and woman were not created at the same moment in time ... There is a time lapse between man's appearance and that of woman's.

The account leads us through a rather instructive process.

God detailed the process to help us see just who it is we are as MALE and FEMALE.

Key Thought:

By God's design, man and woman, though different, are meant for each other ... therefore, in relationships follow the established pattern.

Man was created.

He is alive, housed in a garden in Eden. God assigns him with work, a good thing.

... and then the Biblical account seems to abruptly change.

Out of the blue we read ...

The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

God had not made a mistake. It was not that He had missed something and could not quite put His finger on it.

God knew exactly what He was doing.

... and God sets out to complete what was incomplete.

Some observations from God's Word ...

**Divine assessment that notes a lack, leads to divine initiative
2:18**

It is for our benefit that God explains what happened and what we are to make of it.

Creation is almost complete.

God points out what He knew all along ... that right now with the way things stood, Adam was not in good shape ... but Adam did not know that.

Divine Assessment:

"It is not good for man to be alone."

Man, created by God, **has a perfect nature** – no sinful bent in any part of him ; and **a perfect environment** – the world was the best place to be as everything worked and fit together perfectly.

A perfect man and a perfect world with a perfect God did not equal perfection.

Perfect God + Perfect Man + Perfect World \neq (does NOT equal) Perfection.

... we scratch our heads ...

God is saying this ...

He needs to get a message across not just to Adam, but to all MALES. Men, this is what reality is about.

Without a FEMALE, MALES ARE REALLY UP A CREEK ... ALONE.

Ladies, do not misconstrue that statement.

This inaugural, first event is pattern setting. Here is what relationships are to look like for the rest of the ages.

This is important stuff.

Know what is being said.

God has created the MALE with something “missing”.

ALONENESS at this point is something ADAM had neither understood or experienced.

He was oblivious to it.

God picked out what Adam did not know or see.

God is insightful, understanding things about us that we have not even a clue about.

Therefore, God’s assessment leads Him to complete what was not yet quite finished.

His method is unique.

God takes the long route to drive home a point into the mind and heart of this first man.

The Divine Initiative:

God uses “side” issues to teach us main truths.

Genesis 2:19-20

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.

So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field.

We seem to have veered off the point of what has just said. We jump from Adam being ALONE to Adam being given the task of naming the animals.

... and it is for that reason that God puts Adam through the work of naming the animals.

God’s assignment to Adam is to name the creatures.

Adam does not merely say the first thing that comes to his mind when he sees the animal, but assesses the animal and gives it a name suitable to its nature.

Through this process, what God already knew, Adam now begins to pick up.

Imagine the scene. Adam names the animals ... horses ... but he notices that when the horses come by, that there is a Mr. Horse and Mrs. Horse.

Then come the CATS ... and again, it is not just these are the CATS, but that there is a MR. CAT and a MRS. CAT.

All the animals had a MALE and a FEMALE, one that was their compliment.

... and as Adam finishes off the job, he realizes that he is **SOMETHING**, whoever and whatever he is, and that is all that there is.

There is no one, nothing, that compliments or fits along with him.

He stands isolated, different from the rest of creation. Everyone of the animals had a SOMETHING, a MATE, a companion, except MAN.

Everyone of the animals has an COMPLIMENT, except him.

Now he knows and senses that something is not quite the way it ought to be.

Now he is ready to say, "Something is missing in my life! What could it be?"

... and Scripture inserts for us ...

But for Adam no suitable helper was found.

He has no counterpart.

There is a specially designed "void" in his life that only a counterpart, a "helper" will be able to fill.

He needs someone who CORRESPONDS to him.

... and that results in God doing His special creative work in the making of woman.

Adam cannot create "HER".

She is to be God's gift to him ... and so Adam, "lost" Adam waits ...

Without experiencing loneliness, Adam would not be ready to receive and appreciate Woman.

Here is God's strategy.

God was not going to force WOMAN upon MAN.

God wanted this to be a situation that grabbed MAN'S heart in such a way that he would never forget the moment.

This one that was MISSING was going to be SPECIAL, GOD'S PRECISE PROVISION, the BEST OF THE BEST ... and man had to "second" God's action, or give it an emphatic "amen" ... a hearty endorsement.

This was not going to be a left-over.

This was not a "anything that comes close will do" solution.

There was too much at stake, as it were, to just bring the MRS. to him and say, "Hey, this is your partner."

This was not going to be a, "Well, this is what you get; case closed" scenario.

God wanted MAN in on this with Him. He wanted MAN not just to take what was given, but to enthusiastically recognize that there was not a last minute thought, but a specially designed and planned for moment.

There are certain lessons or points that are of such importance that God wants to so deeply drive them into our being and psyche that He involves us in such a way that we will never forget WHAT happened and WHY it happened.

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.**

God pulls off what only God can do.

He puts the man into a sound sleep and removes something from his side – here translated “rib”.

And from that “rib”, God “builds” or “constructs” a woman.

The woman is from his side, not his head or his feet.

The indication is that she is on the same level as he.

The woman is made out of the same material as his body.

She is just as “human” as he is. She is not second rate.

In each and every way imaginable, this creation of God’s – WOMAN – is the exact fit, the perfect compliment, to MAN.

She is very much like him, yet different.

Though she is definitely different, the similarities are to striking.

“If man’s partner were an exact replica, a multiplication of his exact kind, incompleteness and solitariness would remain.”

“Yet – and this is the other possibility – if his helpmate were so different as to be not at all like him they together could never form a true unity, a new single identity.”

Man who was by himself, now in a sense has become two, and when those two would come together in close relationship, they would once again become one.

This was a close as you could get to being the same, and yet have a distinguishable difference.

Man is waking up and the Woman is waiting for him. It is almost as if a wedding ceremony is about to take place.

God, as it were, is the Father of the Bride, takes the Woman down the aisle to meet the Groom.

The organ begins to play: Here comes the Bride ...

... and we will get to the wedding next week.

THE POINT OF GOD’S UNIQUE WORK WITH MAN AND WOMAN

Think through what has been recorded carefully ... and do not react to what is said until after we complete this passage, Lord willing, next week or just after Thanksgiving.

Since God knows things about us that we do not know about ourselves ...

1. Listen to what God says.

This is not just a “Bible story”. This is not a myth.

This is DIVINE REVELATION.

This is God speaking ... seriously, intentionally and pointedly on a very important matter.

If we do not get this we will revert to our old ways and miss what God intended.

What God says here is very different. God is not looking to be elected to office. He is not looking to the polls to see what needs to be said.

God says it as it needs to be said.

Here is how it is put for us by God Himself:

Isaiah 55:8-9

... my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord.

And to make His point even more pointy, God says that not only does He not think like us, but that His thinking is better than our thinking.

As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.

God may be out of step with society, but He is right in step with reality.

He knows what He is talking about ... even on gender issues.

2. Marriage is not a cultural event, but a divine event.

We do not adjust or redefine marriage each generation as to what we think it is according to the times and trends.

It is to be the same event all over the world, because it is beyond culture.

What marriage is, is divinely revealed to us.

This is a God-creation; a God-designed, sanctioned and operated event.

It definitely is not a human invention, nor is it subject to our whims and passing fads.

3. God wants people to so experience the richness of relationship that He goes the extra mile to make it happen.

What we have here is God’s best, not God’s mediocre, I really don’t care how things work, attitude.

God, who desires to be glorified, honored and recognized, has glorious glory.

When He does something, He does it right ... even for people.

So what we have here is God’s richest and best.

4. Man and woman are equal ... sort of

Both are made in God’s image.

Both are made of the same “material”.

Both are gifted.

Both are to be equally respected.

Both are made in God's image.

Man and woman both receive God's salvation and blessing. Both are recipients of His presence and gifts.

There is equality in WORTH, VALUE and DIGNITY ... a very important sense.

But man and woman are not equal in EVERY sense.

... or else God would not have had to make a MAN and a WOMAN.

But He both man and woman.

So there is difference.

Our world is obsessed with EQUALITY.

Our cultural, current WorldView desires that everyone be "equal"; we attempt to remove all distinctions.

This may seem to be a noble attitude, and in some respects it is. But when it equality is pushed into places it was never meant to be stuffed, things get bent out of shape, no matter how sincere the attempts being made are.

In a sense, EQUALITY was not super high on God's agenda when He made MAN and WOMAN.

He established a degree of equality – enough to keep us humble and in touch with one another, but He also highlighted the differences – enough to make us need what the other has.

EQUALITY must be balanced with DIFFERENCES.

God does not make us all EQUAL in every sense.

God does not give all of us the same I.Q.

He does not give us the same appreciation for art.

He gives some of us bodies that are coordinated, others of us are rather clumsy.

He gives some of us musical talents, others skill with their hands, to others He gives wealth.

To others God seems to give big breaks, opportunities, while some of us just putter through life in the regular routines.

We are NOT equal to each other, and God does not apologize for that.

He shapes us as He chooses.

Therefore, unlimited equality is not something that God desires and something that we should not expect.

... now do not stop listen at this point and let your North American mind derail you.

... a reference to HERMENEUTICS.

We read our present situation BACK INTO THE TEXT ... and that is unacceptable.

Today, when we read this we think about the big buzz words in our society – INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS.

We think of fuzzies, warm feelings, romantic candle lit meals.

But **Genesis** was written from a much more practical perspective.

The Word of God says that WOMAN was made to be a HELPER TO MAN.

For a few minutes let us just listen to what the Bible has said.

God did not say that woman was to be a companion.

Man and woman were to do something for each other.

They were given defined roles.

... and if they do not get those roles done, there will be nothing else that will develop well.

They will never get to the level of “interpersonal sharing”. Nor will deep interpersonal sharing create a good marriage.

Good marriages do what God designed them to do.

5. A great marriage displays encompassing leadership and supportive subordination

DISTRIBUTE INFO SHEETS ON MARRIAGE

What God says here, and Moses recorded, did not fit with the societies of the day, just as it does not fit in our society.

In those societies, women were viewed as inferior to men.

What God established in this marriage covenant was to give women worth equal to men and ***leave man with the responsibility to make certain this took place.***

So that which God said here was taking things to a level that no society around God’s people was reaching.

God set out His framework in the beginning with the focal point being the FAMILY, not the INDIVIDUAL.

The basic unit of the people was not an individual human being, but a social grouping – the family or household.

The Israelite people as a whole was seen as a collection of tribes, which in turn were seen as collections of clans, which in turn were seen as collections of families.

In **Genesis 2-3** the man functioned as “the head” or “the representative” of the woman.

The man’s role was to govern the household and represent it to others. He related the household to other households and to the people as a whole. In a real social structural sense, he summed up the household in his own person.

His family was not simply something he ruled over for his own benefit or pleasure.

It was an extension of his own person; he cared for the family and identified with it personally. He governed the family as the head of it, not as the conqueror of it.

The woman's role was primarily within this basic social unit.

When a man took a wife to himself, she left her father's house, took his name and became part of her husband. His children likewise were seen as a continuation of him or his house.

In Israelite society the woman did experience real subordination to her husband

She was part of the man's family, but she was not his property.

There was a genuine reciprocity in the relationship.

The key to understanding the relationship between man and woman is understanding that the relationship was formed around the family unit and the husband was the head of that unit.

The word, SUBORDINATION, is almost profanity in the minds of our society ... in their WorldView.

Women being subordinate to men is outdated in our society, but not God's.

My boss was complaining in a staff meeting the other day that he wasn't getting any respect. Later that morning he went out and got a small sign that read, "I'm the Boss." He then taped it to his office door.

Later that day when he returned from lunch, he found that someone had taped a note to the sign that said: "Your wife called. She wants you to bring her sign back."

Subordination means literally ORDERED UNDER.

It does NOT mean any notion of INFERIOR VALUE.

It does refer to ORDER in relationships.

It is much bigger than OBEY ME.

It does NOT mean OPPRESSION or the USE OF FORCE FOR DOMINATION.

Yes, there are cases of subordination which are demeaning, but that does not mean that all cases of subordination are wrong.

Society speaks of equality on the basis of position and role; God does not. He addresses it on the basis of worth, dignity and value.

On a team players are subordinate to the coach. The players themselves are subordinate to their captain.

It does not mean that the captain is the best player, the superior person – but he does lead.

In work we have managers and bosses ... and for the sake of peace in the office, we are subordinate to them.

There are good bosses and awful bosses.

God assigns man the role of encompassing leadership in the marriage relationship ... in the best sense of the phrase.

“SUBORDINATION” simply refers to the order of a relationship in which one person, the subordinate, depends upon another person for direction.

It is very important to see that ..

The purpose of this order is to allow those in the relationship to function together in unity.

Flesh this out for just a further moment.

Just because God makes the MAN THE TEAM CAPTAIN, the HEAD OF THE HOUSE, does not mean that He makes him the brains of the operation.

If the WOMAN can play a position better than the MAN, a smart team captain gives her that place.

To delegate is not to abdicate. Rather it multiplies or increases the efficiencies of relationship.

This means that if MEN are not smart, if they are insecure, they WILL revert to the negative strategy of DEFENSIVE CONTAINMENT.

... and that leads to a host of problems.

Rather, men are encouraged to be smart, follow God's directives and **use the positive strategy of CREATIVE ENLARGEMENT.**

It is possible to create boundaries without bonds.

God always has a point person ... and in the home that just happens to be the man.

The reason we miss this important truth and minimize it today is because we have subconsciously taken on society's WorldView.

We think far too individualistically ... and sadly we lose in so doing.

What our egos desire is rarely what our person needs.

Genesis 2 takes on the at times difficult realities and sets into stone the direction of God ... direction that cannot be improved on.

Man loves his wife by taking on the primary responsibility for making their partnership display God's glory; and woman loves man by voting in favor of the same motion.

Adam does not think that this is a raw deal ... neither does Eve.

It works fantastically ... until sin messes things up.

5. Both man and woman remain dependent upon God.

Here may be what we need to do with God's Word.

This week answer this question:

Who am I, as a woman?

Who am I, as a man?

The answer will come in one of two formats.

Many of us will define ourselves by our past.

Our experiences, particularly if they were painful and hurtful will be how we see ourselves.

We can see this attitude expressed in a marriage when we hear statements like:

“Oh, you’ll never change!”

... or ...

“Don’t you understand what I’ve been through?”

The past is emotionally powerful and presently debilitating.

That is our reference point.

That is how we define ourselves.

These are real experiences, but too often we have let them squeeze us into a definition of who we are that is anything but helpful in relationships.

Instead, ***let God’s understanding of relationship define you.***

Let His Word shape your WorldView ... in a very practical area of life.