

# Genesis: The Covenant of Marriage

## Genesis 2:4-25

**MPS** God created man as His steward on earth and blessed Him to thrive for His glory.

**OBJ** Every person can understand how God created all things to thrive for glory by four creational distinctives.

### READ Genesis 2:4-25

*These are the generations*

*of the heavens and the earth when they were created,  
in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.*

*5When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, 6and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground— 7then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. 8And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. 9And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*

*10A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. 11The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. 12And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. 13The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. 14And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.*

*15The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. 16And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 17but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”*

*18Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.” 19Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. 20The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. 21So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. 22And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. 23Then the man said,*

*“This at last is bone of my bones  
and flesh of my flesh;  
she shall be called Woman,  
because she was taken out of Man.”*

*24Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. 25And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. **Genesis 2:4-25***

### INTRO

There is much that we learn in Genesis 2, but maybe no chapter more fully addresses the question of Provenance more completely than this chapter. Here we learn of God’s created intention for mankind by the way in which He created us.

We were reminded last week that we are not looking at a second account of creation nor a separate act of creation. Rather, we are given greater detail into because of God’s divine will for creation.

**God created man as His steward on earth and blessed Him to thrive for His glory.**

God’s divine role, assignment and purpose for man affords us greater insight and detail into his creation. And man’s creation does not begin with man himself, but with a new revelation about God. God the Creator is now introduced as God



the Covenant-maker. And His creature “man” is designed to live on the earth in a special relationship and partnership with Him for a specific purpose of glory and good.

**OBJ** Four creational distinctives reveal how God created all things to thrive for His glory.

### Distinctive #1: The Adam of Creation 2:5-7

God’s created intention for man to serve as His steward is revealed as he is *formed* for God’s purpose by design, And His created inspiration as he is breathed to life for partnership with God by His own being. **God created man by His design and being FOR His divine intention and inspiration to serve as His steward in creation.**

### Distinctive #2: The Abundance of Provision 2:8-14

God created a place of abundant provision, *pleasant to the sight and good for food*, and placed man in the midst of it to meet with him there. The glory of Eden’s garden held a central focus but was only an origin of the culminating glory of the whole earth. **God created abundant provision and pleasure for man to live by trust in Him.**

### Distinctive #3: The Authority for Service 2:15-17

God authorized man for service to work and keep the earth that he might maximize production for his good and God’s glory. God’s authority came through a commission to cultivate for more good and glory. We were created to work, and by that work to produce more glory as an act of worshiping God that the whole earth might enjoy His goodness. God’s authority came through a command to trust in Him first with a prohibition to guard his heart. God’s prohibition was never about denying any goodness but directing his first trust in God’s perfect provision. Our work glorifies God and provides good for us when it is done in full dependence and trust in God and His perfect provision. **God endued man with His authority to cultivate the earth for more glory by obedience to His command.**

**TRANS** Today we look at the fourth creational distinctive for God’s glory. These four distinctives outline God’s design for creation. When God set creation in motion, he placed man as His steward. What we see in Genesis 2 is the way man is to operate or live as steward of all creation. Because as goes the steward, so goes the stewardship. **God designed creation to flourish as man serves His God-ordained role in creation.**

### Distinctive #4: Abiding Intimacy 2:18-25

<sup>18</sup>Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.” <sup>19</sup>Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. <sup>20</sup>The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. <sup>21</sup>So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. <sup>22</sup>And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. <sup>23</sup>Then the man said,

“This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh;  
she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.”

<sup>24</sup>Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.  
<sup>25</sup>And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. **Genesis 2:4-25**

This fourth distinctive begins with a declaration from God about man. The declaration stands in stark contrast to creation. Everything to this point God has declared, “It is good.” But when God looked at man alone, He said “*It is not good that the man should be alone*”. **God created man for community, not aloneness nor isolation, that he might know friendship and intimacy, fellowship and communion.**

But along with His negative declaration over man’s aloneness, God gave a solution. God did not say, “good luck Adam. Go figure it out.” regarding how Adam was to address his issue of aloneness. God said, *I will make him a helper fit for him.* **God answers Adam’s aloneness by creating a helper fit for Adam.**



**TRANS** Just as we saw God's created intention for man by His design, so here we see God's created intention by His design in the way he responds to Adam's aloneness that is not good.

**God established marriage as the supreme relationship of creation to glorify Him in abiding intimacy.**

### **OBJ** **Three Aspects of Marriage Covenant**

These three aspects provide the foundation for all relationship and community by introducing the supreme relationship around which all others are oriented.

### **#1: A Helper Fit as God's design for marriage. .18-22**

*Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." 19Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. 20The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. 21So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. 22And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. **Gen 2:18-22***

**God's answer to Adam's aloneness is a helper fit for him, one that corresponds to him.** [In my opinion, next to and second only to the Names by which we know God, this "helper fit", or as I prefer from the NIV, "suitable helpmate" is the most important description in all the Bible.] What God provided to answer Adam's aloneness is provisional, pleasurable, instructional and directional for all of creation and society. **God ordered all creation with a single relationship, a woman for the man.**

**Helper fit reveals God's design for the relationship between man and woman, its importance cannot be overstated.** Summarizing the meaning of *helper fit*, commentator Victor Hamilton explains, "The last part of v. 18 reads literally, "I will make him for him a helper as in front of him (or according to what is in front of him)." This last phrase, "as in front of him (or according to what is in front of him)" (kəneḡdô), occurs only here and in v. 20. It suggests that what God creates for Adam will correspond to him. Thus the new creation will be neither a superior nor an inferior, but an equal."<sup>1</sup> The pieces fit together like they were intended to go that way, not forced, coerced or fabricated. **Helper fit establishes heterosexuality as God's design and will.**

**TRANS** But it tells us far more than only this.

*Helper fit* tells us that man and woman were created distinct, yet equal; corresponding, yet complementary. Men and women were not created to compete with one another for victory over the other, but to work together for glory alongside each other. Each are uniquely designed for the other, to satisfy longing for companionship, to obey God's command and procreate, to walk together in relational wholeness with one another, and to answer aloneness by building intimacy. **Helper fit is God's will for humanity to know His plan for our deepest, abiding intimacy.**

**TRANS** Our understanding is made even greater by how God introduces this to Adam.

In the exercise of his creational stewardship Adam discovers that he is missing something that all other creation has, a corresponding partner. And let's be honest, painfully honest for just a moment – it took every living creature in order for Adam to recognize and admit that there was not a helper fit for him. Now, I know some of you ladies are thinking, "Amen to that. I know that all too well." But I would also offer, in this "friendly" exchange, the simple reflection of "why would you expect any different now? We'll get it done. Just give us a minute." [BIG Smiley face.] At the end of every living creature,

<sup>1</sup> Victor P. Hamilton, [The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17](#), The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 175.



Adam came to a deep, stark reality about himself, he was alone. I don't know how he felt about that. I would guess there were a few feelings, but I would guess he managed to shake them off and ignore them.

**TRANS** Once Adam recognizes the need of his aloneness, God performs the first surgery.

The Lord caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, removed a rib from his side and closed up the place with flesh, and with that rib he made woman and brought her to the man. Adam was formed from the earth, Eve from the rib of man. Adam was placed in the garden, Eve was brought to man. This order of creation tells us NOT what God has already stated about them, that both are created in His image and equal in before Him, but that in the way God created, there is an order to its operation, a distinction, a purpose and plan for man and woman. This relationship of corresponding complementary is of first commitment and priority for abiding intimacy and is superior to all others. This relationship is of first order from which all other relationships are oriented and designed. [God's plan for man and woman is that they are fitted to work together for His glory in the supreme relationship of creation.](#)

Commentator Gordon Wenham summarizes the passage by citing Matthew Henry. "Matthew Henry's comment comes closer to the spirit of the text. '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.'"<sup>2</sup> What we see as broken in this relational design is not from God's created intention but from sin's deceiving fracture. Owen Strachan in his new book, [Reenchanting Humanity: A Theology of Mankind](#), summarizes it well as he affirms the meaning of helper fit when he states, "The Lord did not design men and women to fight with one another. His plan in the Old Testament is for men and women to love one another."<sup>3</sup> [God created man and woman to complement each other in a corresponding relationship for abiding intimacy.](#)

**APPL** Genesis sets the marriage relationship as the cornerstone of every relational institution in creation, community and society included. It is not the only relationship in creation, but it is to be held as the first, the most important and as the originating relationship from which all others begin.

**For the sake of clarity and faithfulness in application we must also state the following.** Man does not correspond to man, nor a woman to a woman. A man is not fitted for women, nor a woman for men. Adam saw and named all the livestock and birds and beasts, but no corresponding fit for him was found from among them. When God gave to Adam a fit helper, a corresponding creation for him, He created A woman for him and brought her to him. [From the beginning, God created a man and a woman to live in a marriage relationship for a lifetime.](#)

**TRANS** The second answer we see is...

**#2: A happy receiving of God's gift in marriage. .23**

*Then the man said,*

*"This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."*

"*This at last*" is not an exhausted end out of frustration, but after hard work, by effort and struggle and the expense of self, expresses the glory of accomplishment dawned upon a new height reached. "*This at last*" is the answer that will satisfy your longing for intimacy as God created for you and you for, that brings Him glory and you His good in lasting satisfaction. Adam states, "she was made for me and like me." The age old question echoes for us here, "But how did Adam know Eve was the right one? He couldn't not know. He couldn't get away from it." He knew, and acted on what He knew by receiving as from God the gift of Eve for his own happiness, in companionship and intimacy. [The glory of abiding intimacy is always and only found in a happy receiving of God's good gift in marriage.](#)

<sup>2</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, [Genesis 1–15](#), vol. 1, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1987), 69.

<sup>3</sup> Owen Strachan, [Reenchanting Humanity: A Theology of Mankind](#). (Ross-shire, Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications Ltd, 2019)



**God teaches us how we are to receive our spouse in marriage.** This verse holds much for us in understanding and direction in the relational satisfaction of marriage.

**ILLUS** I remember the first time I “woke up” and saw my gift from God in a wife. We were in my principle place of study (aka beach at the lake). The first time I set my eyes on her I could not get over her. Little did I know, she had already been watching me, and couldn’t get me off her mind. (Something like that.)

Adam’s “*This at last*” is not the rush of emotion and adrenaline from first sight, but the culmination of all the thrill channeled into deep conviction and immovable commitment. “*This at last*” is IT! I have found the one because I have seen God’s design in her / him, and I am committing my whole life to this person. “I” am now “we”.

The one we receive from God in marriage is never to be dismissed by self. Jesus teaches, “*What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.*”<sup>Mark10:9</sup> And that begins with those in the relationship. Marriage may, and usually does, begin with a strong feeling that is undeniable, but it is not sustained by such. [Obedience to God’s creational mandate is the sustaining strength of marriage in committing oneself by happily receiving the One God gives.](#)

**APPL** **There is a reality that many grow dissatisfied in marriage, men and women alike.** This verse provides strong counsel and direction for anyone no longer satisfied or fulfilled in marriage. As long as you keep looking, you will always find something else that may capture your eyes, but it will destroy your heart, not because the object is bad but because your heart is wandering from God’s plan for you.

**ILLUS** You begin to realize...You never closes your eyes anymore when I kiss your lips, and there's no tenderness like before in your fingertips. You're trying hard not to show it, but baby, baby, you know it. You've lost that lovin' feelin', Whoa, that lovin' feelin'. You lost that lovin' feelin', Now it's gone, gone, gone, whoa. Then you think...baby, baby, I'd get down on my knees for you, If you would only love me like you used to do, (yeah). We had a love, a love, a love you don't find everyday, So don't, don't, don't, don't let it slip away.

**There is only one way to get that loving feeling back, correctly, and it’s not about the feeling.** Frustration in marriage is indicative but should not be prevailing. God designed marriage to grow and remain strong by looking at our spouse and receiving them as His gift. “*This as last*” means [our marriage strengthens as we remember to look at our spouse and acknowledge them as God’s gift in gratitude, regardless of how we feel about some situation, to receive the glad joy and happiness of God’s goodness through them.](#)

**TRANS** And now the third answer.

**#3: A holy relationship that glorifies God through marriage. .24-25**

*Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.*  
<sup>25</sup>*And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.* **Gen 2:4-25**

“*Therefore*” tells us that the writer has laid a foundation and is now forming our understanding. What follows is the introduction to the covenant of marriage, and how God in His created design established marriage as the supremacy of all relationships and the cornerstone of society.

**Marriage forms a new family unit by the commitment to “leave and cleave”.** The feeling in the pursuit solidifies in a commitment of the covenant. This doesn’t mean you never have the feeling. It means the relationship is not formed by the feeling, nor is it dependent upon it. “*A man shall leave*” means he takes the full weight of responsibility for a new family unit as his own, to lead as God leads Him, by initiating the relationship and “*holding fast*” to his wife. He doesn’t hold all the responsibility, but he does own the first, principle portion of it. [The first aspect of the marriage covenant is that a man shifts his primary allegiance away from all others to his wife.](#)



A wife is never a prize won nor a spoil taken in battle; she is received as a gift from God as His favor. “*He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the LORD.*” (Prov 18:22) A man holds fast to his wife to form this new family because she is the object of all his priority, of love, life, energy and attention. **Marriage forms the creation of a new family in God’s eyes.**

**In marriage, God forms a new One by His work.** God makes two people one when they enter into the covenant of marriage. Sexual union consummates what God effectuates. This is why marriage is so important and valuable in God’s eyes. No, you don’t cease to be an individual person, nor lose your personal identity or value before God in marriage. But – in marriage you are one with your spouse before God. One is the reality before God that a husband and wife learn and strive to live in greater reality of their entire life. **The second aspect of the marriage covenant is that God makes a man and woman One as husband and wife to live fully in “WE-centeredness” as they deny selfish “me-centeredness”.**

Sometimes we hear that our spouse does not “complete us”. Actually, in God’s eyes, yes they do. That is exactly what Genesis teaches here when God makes you one. Marriage is not simply a societal structure, though it is that, even though it is fracturing apart and decaying at a mind-boggling rate as that. It is not merely an interpersonal contract of agreement between two parties. We may have trouble fully distinguishing all that this means in our minds, but it is not unclear in God’s mind. **When we strive to establish lines of individuality in marriage, we work against God’s divine work of making us One.**

**Marriage produces a new, indescribable glory in intimacy between two as *naked and unashamed*.** Naked is that state of complete exposure and vulnerability. It will become a state of shame, but here in its perfect state it is a state of knowledge that only holds joy. Imagine this, that in the garden of Eden Adam and Eve had NO, Z-E-R-O, longing to be known. **Do you know why?** They lived perfectly and completely known. That’s what this phrase describes here. They got each other, completely, totally and perfectly. **The third aspect of the marriage covenant is that aloneness is refused by building an ever-growing, ever-deepening, all-consuming intimacy that glorifies God by the goodness it produces.**

**God established marriage as the supreme relationship of creation to glorify Him in abiding intimacy.**

