

*God's Design for*

*Men and Women*

*Gender Roles and Their Place in the Life  
of the Christian*

Stephen Lukens



God's Design for Men and Women: Gender Roles and Their Place in the Life of  
the Christian

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## FOREWORD

**I**t is a great joy and privilege to write this forward for this book, for my son Steve. It is a blessing to see his heart desiring for Christ and His glory, as he speaks on these issues for the good of others.

God created mankind in His image, and He created both male and female, to be His image bearers. God created them righteous, holy, and good - to love Him and to love each other. God created them in such a way that they were to bring forth life and light.

But man instead rebelled against God and His Word, and in his sin has brought forth death and destruction. Instead of walking in moral uprightness for their good and

the glory of God, man chose to commit acts of treason in unrighteousness, and the consequences were devastating. The moment sin was chosen over obedience, death came into the world, and there was instantly tension between God and Adam & Eve, and between Adam and his wife Eve.

Marriage was the first human relationship created by God. From that relationship all other relationships were to flow. First, mankind was called to live and to speak in such a way as to exalt and enjoy God. Secondly they were to live in loving caring ways towards each other. But when they chose to sin, it brought with it pain, suffering, and death. And it produced destruction instead of harmony.

Only in Christ Jesus is there forgiveness for sin, and a restoring of the created order. This means that when a sinner is saved by God's grace, He also leads them in the way of righteousness (by His Word and by the Holy Spirit). As Christians we know that God loves us and has redeemed us in, by, and because of the work and person of Christ Jesus. But many who profess to be Christians do not rightly understand that it is only by the work and person of the Holy Spirit that we learn how to love God and our fellow man. By faith as the Scriptures are read, taught, and preached to us, our mind is being renewed by the grace of God (see Romans 12:1-2).

This is how God sanctifies us to be conformed to the image of His Son. We begin to think differently, to desire differently and therefore, to act differently. All of our life is to be lived by faith in God and His Word. Only by faith can we read the Scriptures and agree with, submit to, and obey what God has spoken. Only by faith do our thoughts align with God's as we love what He loves, and hate what He hates. Here by faith does the Church stand as a radiant Bride, as She lives for the glory of God, the good of mankind, as She waits for Her Husband's return to take Her home. Only then do we rightly understand that God created marriage to be a shadow of the relationship that Christ Jesus has with His Bride - the redeemed - the Church.

God created marriage to be a shadow of the relationship that Christ Jesus has with His Bride - the redeemed - the Church. In the incarnation we see Jesus living and dying as the perfect Image Bearer (meaning He reflected the glory of God in all He did and said). Jesus lived a perfect and sinless life for the glory of God and for the good of mankind. So, if we profess to be a Christian, then we must walk as Jesus walked in righteousness, and speak as Jesus spoke in truth. If we are walking by faith in Him, then we will have a proper understanding of right and wrong, truth and falsehood, love and hatred, wisdom and foolishness, etc. The Christian does not invent marriage,

life, and love, but submits to God and His Word in all of life. Our personal opinion is conquered by the Truth of God, and God's Word is true food and drink for our souls. As Christians we must always seek to speak and live the truth. In others words; to honor God with our thoughts, desires, actions, and speech.

In the chapters that follow - I pray you see the beauty of King Jesus, the gospel of grace, and the purpose of the Church, the Body of Christ. I pray that as you grow in your understanding of who Jesus is, and what He accomplished; you will see the need for a Biblical view of marriage, the gift of life, and the sovereignty of God. May the topics covered in this book stir you up to ponder and consider the purpose for which God created you. And may you grow in your love for God, your fellow man, and your hatred of sin.

By His grace and for His glory,

Mark Lukens

# INTRODUCTION



ur culture is constantly telling us how we are to live our lives. It does this mainly in two ways. The first is through the media's attempt to project their idea of truth, even though truth can only be found in God. They have an agenda that is contrary to the things of God and they are used by Satan to lure our hearts and minds away from what truly matters, namely Christ.

The second way that culture tries to tell us how to live is through the public's popular opinion. Instead of seeking the Word of God for truth and understanding, many within the church have turned to popular opinion and the agenda of those outside of their church for the basis upon how they should reach the unregenerate with the gospel. They have

heeded the advice of the condemned and ignored the commands of their Lord and Savior.

Throughout these pages I would like to challenge the particular mindset that leads to this submission to worldly, sinful thinking and actions. This work is an attempt to bring light to a situation that has been shrouded in much darkness and ignorance, at least in many individual's expressions of the issues. It is an attempt to bring solace to those in pain and joy to those searching for truth.

Throughout, I hope to shed some light on the meaning and purpose of God's creation of mankind, our purpose on the earth, and what our mission is going forward. For we have not been created to merely dwell on the earth, live our lives, and then return to dust. We must come to see and understand the reasons that we have been created, as well as the many ways that we can proclaim that reason to the rest of the world.

I pray that the words written and relayed through these pages bring glory to God alone and enable sinners, like myself, to see a more beautiful and clear picture of God's creation and the way that it majestically reflects His beauty and strength.

There is no creation on this earth created more

beautifully than the human being, and yet so many times there is a neglect in the area of giving glory to God for the great and amazing things that human beings do and also realizing the sinful and fallen state that most human beings constantly live in. My prayer with this work is to attempt to open people's eyes to the beauty of creation and thereby, the beauty of our Lord and Savior.

If we are to live in such a way that others can see that we belong to God, then we should be able to show them the reason that we have been created the way that we have. My hope is that through an examination of Scripture we may begin to see why we have been created male and female. Why we have been commanded to marry and to raise children. Why we are to live as Christ commanded within the familial structure.

It would be my great joy to see my words and thoughts brought to use as an instrument of mercy in the lives of those seeking and yearning for the Truth, Christ Jesus. At the same time I desire for anything that is of man and not of God to be passed over so that the things of God may shine forth brightest.

May we seek to bring knowledge and understanding to those in need who merely use head knowledge and not heart knowledge:

*I believe that, at this present time, we are in great danger of being burdened with a crowd of so-called converts who do not really know anything as it ought to be known. They attended a revival meeting, were much excited, and thought they were converted; but just ask them to explain to you the simplest truths of the gospel, and you will soon discover how little they know. Could they explain the three R's, ruin, redemption, and regeneration. Do they know what the ruin is? Do they know what the remedy for that ruin is? Do they understand at all what it means to be born again? Do they comprehend what the new nature is, or what "justification by faith" means? Perhaps someone says, "They do not comprehend your theological terms." I do not mind whether they know the meaning of the terms that are familiar to many of us; but do they know the truths themselves? There is a certain degree of Christian knowledge which is absolutely necessary to salvation. (ca.1860) — Charles H. Spurgeon*

May this work do at least three things for those who



read its pages and try to understand the concepts relayed. First, may it bring glory to God alone and not to myself or any other man. There has only been one man who has ever lived that deserves glory, Jesus our Lord and Savior.

Second, may it open the eyes of those in need of seeing the grace of God revealed from Heaven for the first time. There are many who would claim to know God and yet refuse to acknowledge Him as such. May their eyes be opened to the Word of God and to the beauties contained within Scripture.

Third, may it renew the strength of those saints who are seeking for affirmation that their belief in God and His Truth are sure and unshakable no matter who stands against them. Our God is a mighty fortress, a great bulwark for those who place their trust wholly in Him. May those who place their hope and trust in Him come to see Him even more clearly than they have ever seen Him.

# GOD'S DESIGN FOR MEN AND WOMEN

# GOD'S CREATION

## 1

*"Nothing teaches us about the preciousness of the  
Creator as much as when we learn the  
emptiness of everything else."*

*— Charles Haddon Spurgeon*

**G**od, the almighty, ruler and sustainer of all things "created the heavens and the earth." (Genesis 1:1, ESV) This is one of the most well-known passages in Scripture and yet so often people seem to forget what this truly means. This verse must be understood if we are to understand what it means to be human, what it means to be alive, what it means to be a Christian, and what it means to live as God

created. This one verse sums up the entirety of the creation story laid out in the verses that follow. It does not say that God created from something. Instead it says that in the beginning there was God. So before anything else was created, God was there. There was nothing else that He used as a basis to work from. No foundation upon which He built. There was no one to follow their example. It was God and God alone.

This is crucial in understanding what happens next. For, if we do not see that there was nothing at all besides God, then we cannot begin to understand how everything that is created throughout the rest of the narrative in Genesis exists properly. God decides, not out of loneliness but rather because He wants to, that He is going to create. In our minds this is incomprehensible.

We cannot understand what this even means. Our thinking is flawed in that it is based upon the ways that we create things. We do not have the ability to think in our minds and then have our desired product appear before us. Rather we have to use tools, materials, and calculated plans to produce our ideas. God is not like this. As we can see in Genesis chapter one, God creates by command. He does not need to build and tinker and play with settings to see what works best. He merely commands, and it is.

Now, this idea that God does not have to make and then adapt or change settings with His creation is deeply important with the issue at hand of men and women's roles and sexuality (or gender). However, we will delve into that in a later chapter. For the purpose of this first chapter, we will examine what this meant for the creation as a whole.

So why is it so important that God created the heavens and the earth? Because it shows that He is all powerful, all knowing, and perfect. It shows that He is all powerful in that He does not need anything in order to create. He speaks and things are made and formed. He commands and everything obeys His command.

There were no trees that attempted to say, 'I do not think I will form branches' or animals that said, 'I will not allow the blood to flow through my veins.' Instead God commanded and every single thing in the entire universe obeyed instantly. Why? They obeyed because God is all powerful and commands everything's very existence. Before sin entered the world the animals and trees had no reason to not exist as they were created, perfectly. He not only commanded them to be but also sustains them once they are created.

He is all knowing in that everything that is created in Genesis chapter one, is something that God commanded to

be. It was not suggested to Him by someone else as something that might be nice to create. It was all God. Nothing influenced His creation of the 'heavens and earth' except for Himself. He knows everything about everything that exists because they all exist by the word of His power. He is perfect in that everything He created was perfect.<sup>1</sup>

In Genesis 1:31 we see the declaration that creation was 'very good'. This should not be seen as merely something that is good as we would call something good. This statement that we see in verse thirty-one should be seen as saying that the creation was perfect. For God's good is perfection.

To create something so perfectly can only be done by someone who is perfect. Think about even the best craftsman that you may know; whether they are a builder, a mason, an architect, a chef, an artist, or a mechanic. No matter what they do to create, they will never complete a project without making a mistake. Even if it is a simple mistake that does not really matter in the grand scheme of their creation, they will still always make a mistake. Why? Because they are not perfect, they are not all knowing, and they cannot command their creations to be. An imperfect

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 1:31

being cannot create something that is perfect. It is impossible.

So, with that in mind, let us take a look at some of the aspects of what God created. First, God creates light. Light shines forth with no created thing to cause it. Not only has this been something that has brought me amazement throughout my life, it has caused many scientists to clamber and shout that this shows that Christians and their account of creation are wrong and this is the proof. They would claim that there always has to be something to shine light forth. This light was being shown by something. Only it wasn't something that could be seen or grasped. It was by God's command, His spoken words. If we truly believe that God is all powerful, then this has to be sufficient for us in understanding where the light came from.

Next we see the creation of the waters, the sky, and dry land. Why has God begun His creation of the world in this manner? Because He already knew what He was going to create in totality and therefore He created in such a way as to provide the best and most suitable environment for that creation. He did not create as He went along, but rather He had a plan for the entirety of creation before He began any of it.

He began with the purpose of creating a people for

Himself, a people that will be set apart from the rest of humanity bringing glory to His name alone. In order to create such a people, God decided that He would create a creation that would magnify Him above all things. Thus giving all created beings a glimpse into the presence and mind of God.

On the third day God created plants and vegetation. This is where we begin to delve into the creation in such a way as to begin to see the meaning and purpose for why certain things are created. God could have created one type of plant that would be the food sustenance for everything that follows. However, He did not do this. Instead:

*God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth." And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. (Genesis 1:11-12, ESV)*

The vegetation was given the command to produce seeds that belonged only to their own specific species. This



is amazing, because not only does it create a wide variety of plants, but it also causes them to be able to reproduce and to grow in number. The idea that there is now vegetation to provide food for the animals and people to come is amazing. However, when you think about and understand that God did not just create the vegetation in order for it to be edible, but also planned that this same vegetation would provide oxygen for everything that breathes is truly amazing.

God created the world in a specific order and with specific functions. Not only did He create with functions for human beings, but He even went to such detail as to make sure that the earth would be able to sustain everything else that He was planning to create. If He were merely creating new things as He went and did not have a plan and purpose from the start, then would He not have created human beings first? Instead God created the way that He did in order to best be able to provide an environment that would suit His purpose and design. God created in order to create a people for Himself to bring glory and praise to His name alone.

Jumping to the fifth day we begin to see the creation of intelligent animals. This was something more than vegetation, which was meant to give and sustain life. Birds

and sea animals are brought into existence. Creatures created to eat in order to survive. And what is it that God has provided for them to eat? A reproductive vegetation system that will sustain them as it grows and grows. In the following verses we can see the creation of the rest of the land animals and the immense variety that is created according to their own kinds. Again we see that God was merely not creating in order to place a few animals on earth, but rather a wide variety so that there would be enough to fill the earth.

Now, finally on the sixth day of creation, God creates man. Genesis says:

*Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the*

*birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so.*  
*(Genesis 1:26-30, ESV)*

Man is created after the image of God. He is different than all of the rest of creation. He already has been set apart for a different purpose than plants and animals. Man will have dominion over everything else that was created. God even makes sure that man knows that the plants are good to eat, both for themselves and also for every kind of animal. The key piece of this passage that I would like to make sure that we see is the fact that God creates mankind as male and female. He does not create them without gender or distinction. This is a great difference from the description of how the animals of the earth are described in this first chapter of Genesis. Even though we know that they were created in different genders as well, the first chapter of

Genesis does not specifically point this out to us, but it does do so with the creation of man. Why? Is it merely because they are commanded to be the rulers of every other living thing and therefore more detail is given about them? Or, is it because God makes a clear distinction between the two types of human beings that He has just created? One is male and one is female. They have two different roles, and yet we see later on in Genesis that the female is the perfect helper for the male.

This distinction is crucial when understanding what mankind has just been called to do. They are to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth. Immediately we see that God is calling them to procreate and thereby to produce more males and females all the way up to filling the earth. God could have created mankind without gender distinction, but He did not. Right from the start we see that He intends for there to be male and female. Not only that, but we see in Genesis chapter two that, “the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.” (Genesis 2:18, ESV) Man, the gender not the species, needed a helper. Not only did he need a helper, but someone who would complement him and how he was created. A few verses later we see the description of how they are to act with one another:

*And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. 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." Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. (Genesis 2:22-25, ESV)*

Not only are there several things that we often miss because we are reading this in hindsight, but people seem to ignore it altogether. There is a difference between the descriptions used to describe mankind. We have his and her; she and he.

Many people today will attempt to say that marriage is something that is not of God. Yet, right here at the very foundation of who we are as people, we see a description of what marriage should look like. A man shall leave his parents, and shall be joined to his wife. Immediately we see that a man will be joined in marriage to a woman. God is very clear how this process is to work from the very beginning. The joining together that it mentions here refers

to the intimate relationship produced through God's binding of one man to one woman. Therefore, I think that we can see a distinction here between a man and a woman, and a man and his wife. The man leaves his mother and father to be joined to his wife. Therefore, from the very beginning we begin to see this picture of how God intends for His creation to live. I shall further discuss marriage and its proponents in a later chapter.

What else do we know about creation? In Psalm 139 David gives a powerful description of how we are created. He says:

*For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them. (Psalm 139:13-16, ESV)*

This passage is extremely important in discussing the issue of how God creates and sustains. First, in Genesis we saw a description that human beings are created male and female. We saw that they were created to become parents. So it is important to note that David, rightly so, gives due where it is deserved. He makes the profound statement that God formed him in his mother's womb. This is important when discussing the issue of sexuality and gender. God; the perfect, all powerful, all knowing God, still creates life in the womb. He does not merely leave it up to however the creation was originally programed to work, but rather molds and shapes new life into His design.

A distinction needs to be made here however. Because of Adam's sin, seen later in the book of Genesis, sin has entered the world. No longer are God's creations brought into the world as perfect and good. They no longer have complete dominion over the plants and animals. They are brought into the world sinful, a world that is itself riddled with the effects of sin. Children are born with defects that are seen and unseen. Plants are poisonous to animals and humans. Everything dies.

However, we need to understand that God is still the one who creates and gives life. He still determines what gender a baby will be, what hair color they will have, and

how many days they will live. Just because there is sin in the world we cannot throw away the fact that God gives and sustains life. Without His command to be, no single baby would ever be born. David sees this perfectly. He gives glory to God for creating him even though He was unseen by the world around him. Every woman that becomes pregnant does so because God has ordained it to be. Every life that enters the world does so because of God's sovereign decree from before the foundation of world.

The second part of the distinction and clarification that needs to be made is this: God does not create sin or its effects. Sin, our sin, destroys and distorts everything that exists all on its own:

*Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is*



*fully grown brings forth death. (James 1:12-15, ESV)*

It is paramount that we understand this moving forward in this discussion. If we cannot come to the agreement that one: God creates, and creates perfectly, and two: that sin corrupts and distorts that perfection to the utmost. Then we will not be able to come to a conclusion, based upon Scripture, that is just, true, and logical. For we know that all three of these things are attributes of God. He is just, His word is true, and He is logical and acts with reason.



# GOD'S PURPOSE FOR HIS CREATION

## 2

*"A person deeply in love cannot keep his thoughts  
from the object he loves. The reason we think  
on God no more, is, because we love Him no  
more"*

— *Thomas Watson*

*W*

hy have we been created? This is a question that mankind has asked for thousands of years. There have been many attempts to give an answer to this deep question, and yet, more times than not the wrong

answer is given. In the book of Romans the apostle Paul delves into this issue and portrays some clarity as to why we have been put here in the first place:

*But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, “Why have you made me like this?” Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use? What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory—even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles? (Romans 9:20-24, ESV)*

It is here that we begin to see pieces of what it means to live for God's purpose. Paul declares that we, the vessels of clay, have been created in order to see and bring glory to God. What an amazing thought! That we, a mere creation, have been called and chosen to reflect the glory of the Holy God! How though can we reflect the glory of a Holy God

when we ourselves are so sinful and lacking? It is only through the work of the Holy Spirit in and through our lives that we can begin to see a change in the way we live, act, and speak. It is through these things that we reflect or deflect the glory of God. As it relates to the issue at hand, we begin to gain a glimpse of what it means to be created for a purpose.

In reflecting God, we shine His glory through our words, deeds, and thoughts. We should be striving to reflect God to everyone that we come in contact with at all times. If we deflect His glory, our sin shines forth the brightest in our lives and therefore in our deflection we expose our own depravity and need for a Savior.

In this passage from Romans we can begin to understand the purpose behind God's creation. He wanted to make vessels of mercy in order for His glory to be shown. This was the whole purpose and fuel behind the creation of the entire universe. He created in such a way as to design from the very beginning that certain individuals would be chosen, or elected, as His children. He did not merely create in order to give a place for human beings to live. Rather, He created the earth in order to create a people that He would redeem for Himself. If we truly believe that God has chosen those in Him before the foundation of the world, then we must believe that the world was created in

order to secure that sovereign election.

We have already discussed how God created both male and female, separate and yet the perfect complement to one another. Now, we turn to the purpose for creating males and females. Why are they different? What makes them different? What effect does each have on those around them?

All of these questions are ones that today's culture would look at and give an answer to that I do not think follows the truth of Scripture. They would claim that each person is who they are and may define what that means on their own and in their own terms. Scripture says just the opposite. We have already discussed this with an examination of how God created male and female from the very beginning of time.

So what does Scripture actually say? Males and females are different. We see from Proverbs this description:

*An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels. The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain. She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life. She seeks wool and flax, and works with*

*willing hands. She is like the ships of the merchant; she brings her food from afar. She rises while it is yet night and provides food for her household and portions for her maidens. She considers a field and buys it; with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard. She dresses herself with strength and makes her arms strong. She perceives that her merchandise is profitable. Her lamp does not go out at night. She puts her hands to the distaff, and her hands hold the spindle. She opens her hand to the poor and reaches out her hands to the needy. She is not afraid of snow for her household, for all her household are clothed in scarlet. She makes bed coverings for herself; her clothing is fine linen and purple. Her husband is known in the gates when he sits among the elders of the land. She makes linen garments and sells them; she delivers sashes to the merchant. Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come. She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed; her*

*husband also, and he praises her: "Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all." Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates. (Proverbs 31:10-31, ESV)*

An excellent wife by the standards listed here would be excellent indeed. For she would be one of many talents and have an inner strength gained from toil and care of her household. Yet, men are different. They are called to provide and care for their families in ways that women are not. I will discuss this difference in a later chapter.

Both men and women are called to discipline their children and to "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22:6, ESV) And then there is this passage from Ephesians:

*Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as*



*Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. (Ephesians 5:22-33, ESV)*

There clearly is a different calling that God has placed upon men and women. Men are called to lead their wives and families in a way that women are not created to do. They are to be the example for their wives to follow in pointing them to Christ. They hold different roles and are

called to act in different manners within the church:

*Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled. Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled. Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us. Bondservants are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior. (Titus 2:2-10, ESV)*

Not only can we see a difference between the descriptions in these passages, we can bear witness to the facts our own eyes have seen. Older men are to teach younger men how to be dignified, to have integrity in their work, and to have sound speech. Did you see that? Younger men are to be trained in sound speech. What does this mean for us today?

It refers to having sound thought and argument. Being able to defend what one believes without being swayed by the popular opinion of the day. To have the ability to relay a concise and intelligent thought to someone else would be sound speech. Today instead of being able to do this, most young men are silent, shy, reserved, and unable to complete a comprehensive argument or thought.

This has nothing to do with the fact that some may claim that it is because they are more feminine. Rather, it has to do with the simple fact that the men in their lives have not trained them up in the way that they should go. They have not taught them to be sound in speech and to be dignified in their dealings with others.

Likewise, we see that women are to be taught, by older women, how to be self-controlled, how to remain pure in thought and deed, how to work at home (here we can see a reference to the excellent wife from Proverbs) and how to

be kind and submissive to their own husbands.

Women and men are to complement each other. The one is called to be trained to speak soundly and to work with integrity. The other is called to support and care for their husband. One important thing to note here is that women are called to be submissive to their own husbands. This is not a calling for all women to submit to all men in the same way that they would to their own husband. We see in Ephesians that this relationship is much deeper than what the world calls a marriage and cannot be rightly understood without looking at the comparison that Scripture lays out for us. We will look at this further in the next chapter.

The last difference that I would like to point out, though there are many more, is that of leadership. Men are called to be the leaders in the church as well as the home. Paul talks about this many times throughout his letters to the churches in Asia Minor. He lays out qualifications for the early churches to found their leadership upon and to use as a building block. He says to Titus:

*This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you—if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his*

*children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it. (Titus 1:5-9, ESV)*

Most of the time when this passage is read, those reading it miss one of the intricate pieces that are implied within. Not only does each and every elder need to fit this description, but he also needs to fit the description that we just examined from chapter two of Titus. A man cannot be an elder, sound in biblical thought and deed, unless (if he is married) he can also prove to be a good and faithful husband and father.

Likewise, the wife of the elder must fit the description of Titus chapter two. If she does not, then she will not be doing what God has called her to do in the home. Do you see the subtlety that Paul places here? If an elder is to have

a wife, and a wife's calling is to be submissive to the ways by which her husband thinks their house should be run, and the house is to be run by the method listed in chapter two, does this not then mean an elder's wife must be one who trains the younger women in the Lord? So then, it is not merely a description for what an elder, the husband, should look like. But it is also what a family of an elder should look like.

God is a God of order and does nothing whimsically. If He has taken such pains to lay out the different callings and aspects of both men and women, then why would He create a male or a female that cannot live as they have been created? This is the issue that we see breaking and dividing our culture at this time. One camp refuses to include sin in the picture and claims that since they are born "feeling" a certain way then that is how they are to act. Or that if they desire the opposite sex then that means they should change what sex they are in order to be able to incorporate their desires.

But wait, does this view fit with Scripture? I fear that it does not. For, we just examined a passage that tells us that women and men are to be self-controlled. This means that in their sin, they have a tendency to give in and to not control their passions, desires, and lusts. How then can we say that those very passions, desires, and lusts are things

that people should act upon in order to feel good, or pleasure? We should not feel good when we have no self-control, when we live in such a way as to reject the model that Christ has laid out for us in Scripture.

Women want to be men and hold the positions that God has designed for them. Men want to be women and to hold the positions that God has designed for them. So, they begin an attempt to try to create methods and scientific solutions for doing so.

Women are given leadership in the church even though it is plainly only given to men. Elders must be married to one woman if they are married, and therefore since women are the spouses of elders, they cannot become elders themselves. This is one of the areas that we can see a direct correlation between our cultures fascination with the LBGT community and the way that the LGBT culture has found its way into the church. Instead of standing firm upon the qualifications for an elder, the modern church has opened its doors to allow a different, though false, interpretation to invade those qualifications.

Women have been told that they do not need to submit to their husbands. That their husbands are merely idiots and do not deserve to be submitted to because women are so much more intelligent than that. However, it is not about

intelligence. It is about submitting to God's plan and design for how the two genders are to interact with one another.

Men stay home and allow their wives to work and bring home an income while they raise the children. This not only deprives a child of the tender and sensitive side of their mother, but it also creates a hierarchy within the home that places the woman as the head of the house rather than the man. How can a man, expect to lead and train his family in the things of God when he cannot even care for his own family? By allowing his wife to be the bread winner and to provide what is needed for the family, men forsake the very role that God has placed them in.

There are exceptions to this where there are extenuating circumstances that change the way that a family should function. The husband could be injured or disabled and therefore unable to work. I am not saying that these cases are in the same place as those who willingly stray from the commandments laid out in Scripture for how a husband and father should lead his family.

Therefore:

*The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach,*



*the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil. (1 Timothy 3:1-7, ESV)*

This speaks true not only to those who are called to be overseers in the church, but also to individual families. This is the only way that the marriage relationship that we will examine in the next chapter makes any sense in regards to the church, Christ, the family, and leadership.

A man is to love his wife and care for her and his children in such a way that they can feel the love of Christ through what he says and does. There are so many people today that think that a man should have little to nothing to do with the manner that his children are raised. This could

not be further from what Scripture has laid out for us. A man should be able to teach and train his children in such a manner as to be able to lead them in the ways of the Lord. He should not be distant and aloof. For, he is called to love his wife and children just as Christ loves the church.

# WHAT DOES MARRIAGE MEAN?

## 3

*"Levity and mutability are not fit preparations  
for a state that only death can change. Let the  
love and resolutions that brought you into that  
state continue with you to the last."*

— *Richard Baxter*

**T**he first thing that should be considered when discussing marriage, and what it means, is where it comes from. Was marriage something that was instituted by men, or by God? Is it something that the state has control

over, or does God? What makes a person married and what qualifies them to become so? These are some of the questions that we should ask in order to seek a better understanding of what it means to be married.

There are several things that I hope will become clearer as we move forward. The first is that God created marriage, it belongs to Him, and He rules over every aspect of marriage in the same way that He rules over the rest of His creation.

If, as we examined in chapter one, God rules and sustains every part of His creation, does this not then mean that He must rule over and sustain marriage? If we truly believe that God controls everything by the word of His power, then we must believe that marriages that last are those that have been blessed by God. Now, I am not saying that every marriage has been approved of by God, but rather that those marriages that do last at least receive common grace.

Now, one might ask what other types of grace there are. For the purpose of this understanding there are two types of grace that we can see. The first is common grace, grace that is given to both unrepentant and redeemed. For example:

*But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. (Matthew 5:44-45, ESV)*

The second type of grace is special grace. This grace refers only to those whom God has called unto Himself. For example, an unbeliever cannot see the things of God, they cannot know His love, and they cannot receive His peace. “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” (Matthew 11:15, ESV)

*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has*

*ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. (1 John 4:7-12, ESV)*

As we can see in the passage from 1 John chapter four, there cannot be any love without God. Therefore we see two things. First, that those who do not know God do not experience true and real love. Second, that we cannot love another human being without God working in us and through us to accomplish that which is pleasing in His sight. This is a crucial part in understanding who we are as human beings. To fully understand that everything one does apart from Christ is polluted and filled with sin is important in discussing the meaning of marriage. If we cannot love until we come to a saving knowledge of Jesus, then how can we claim that two individuals “love” each other so much so that they desire to be “married”?

Ok, so let us not get ahead of ourselves. First, let us determine where marriage comes from. We have already discussed the way that God created mankind, both male and female. However, it is important to note not just what gender types He created, but also how He created them. He creates Eve to be the suitable helper for Adam.

Not only do I believe that Genesis is saying that God

created females to be the perfect counterparts to males, but I also believe that it makes the claim that Eve, specifically, was the perfect counterpart to Adam. Here's why. If God has just created Adam, perfectly and in His own image, does He not know every part of Him? Does this not follow the discussion that God is all-knowing? So then, if God is all-knowing, would He then not know the perfect person to create in order to complement Adam and who he is?

If we believe what Scripture says about the Garden of Eden and the whole world being created good, or perfect, does it then not stand to reason that this relationship between Adam and Eve was created as the perfect relationship? A blueprint by which their children and descendants for all generations are to emulate for the rest of time:

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

This declaration of who Adam and Eve were follows immediately after the description of their creation. There

are some people who claim that this was the author of Genesis' way of helping people to understand and showing that maybe it was marriage then (at the time of the author writing) and should be marriage going forward. They would claim that Adam and Eve were not necessarily married when they were first created. I would argue the exact opposite. If we believe that the Bible is true, that its pages have been inspired by God, then why would we claim that He did not want Genesis' author to write that they were the perfect description of marriage? It is foolish to think so:

*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17, ESV)*

If we truly believe these verses, then there is no other conclusion that we can come to than the one that Adam and Eve were married. They were husband and wife by God's creation and design. God took Adam's rib and made Eve from it. John Gill discusses this in great length in his commentary of Genesis. Gill portrays and compares the act of God bringing Eve to Adam with the act of a father



bringing his daughter down the aisle. Not only has God created the perfect counterpart for Adam but He brings her to Adam in such a way that he understands that she is meant just for him.

We can also see from the passage in Genesis that they were considered man and wife before they sinned. How can we know this? Verse twenty-five of chapter two in Genesis says that they were naked and not ashamed. They were able to commune and live with one another without shame. It is reasonable to assume that Adam and Eve engaged in all aspects of being married since God had commanded them to multiply until filling the earth.

We know from further descriptions in the book of Genesis that when Adam and Eve did sin, they were very ashamed and tried to knit garments for themselves with leaves. If we are to say that Adam and Eve were not married from the start of creation, then we would have to find a time that Adam and Eve became married. There is insufficient evidence to even begin to provide a backing for this stance. From the description that we have in Genesis, it is logical that Adam and Eve were created married rather than created as unmarried human beings. If they were unmarried how were they to fulfill God's command to conceive of children? For, we know from the entirety of Scripture that sex outside of marriage is adultery and God

cannot and would not command Adam and Eve to sin.

If we contend that Adam and Eve were married, then by what way were they married as there was no one to perform a ceremony? The answer is found plainly in Genesis. God created Adam and Eve for each other, and He joined them together by His decree. This seems to be the qualifying parameter that God placed upon their relationship. God in His infinite wisdom chose for Adam a partner to be joined to him in marriage in order to execute the design and promise of God. In order to bring about the promised redemption, He needed to show us the way by which we should be united with one another.

So, at the very root of marriage God creates it to be something very unique, very personal, and very reliant on the trust and respect of the counterpart by whom you are marrying. Unique in that it is the reason that a man will leave his parents and be joined to a woman. Personal in that being joined together as one flesh, is very personal and intimate. It reflects the fact that instead of thinking only about oneself and one person's desires, the married couple must consider each other's needs, desires, and concerns.

Adam and Eve at first did not have some of these thoughts and feelings, because they were already naked and were not ashamed of it. However, now that sin is in the

world, we have different feelings when exposing ourselves in our entirety for the judgment of another. When two individuals have sex, they must trust each other. Again, before sin, Adam and Eve had no reason to not trust each other, but they would quickly realize the change in their relationship. Not only with each other, but with the One who created and gave them life.

Jonathan Edwards says it this way:

*Of all the various kinds of union of sensible and temporal things that are used in Scripture to represent the relation there is between Christ and his church; that which is between bridegroom and bride, or husband and wife, is much more frequently made use of both in the Old and New Testament. The Holy Ghost seems to take a particular delight in this, as a similitude [likeness] fit to represent the strict, intimate, and blessed union that is between Christ and his saints. —  
Jonathan Edwards*

So where are we at so far? God created male and female to be husband and wife. God created marriage through the decree of His power that the act of being joined

together is by His design for His glory. What then do we contend as the next step in understanding more completely what it means to be married? I would like to argue that it means having children, at the very least providing care for them.

This would seem to be a commandment from God. In Genesis we see the Lord command Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply. If we believe the argument that was just made above that Adam and Eve were created for each other in marriage, then we must also believe that children are supposed to be a part of that marriage. Adam and Eve cannot multiply and fill the earth without having children, which comes from having sex, which is a part of the design that God has placed forth inside of the marriage relationship. I would like to discuss children further in the next chapter, so we will leave this discussion to be followed up further in a few pages.

I would now like to discuss why God created marriage. I believe that there are a couple reasons. The first we briefly mentioned, to have children. The second is much deeper and more beautiful. God created marriage in order to show a reflection of the way that He cares for and loves His chosen people:

*Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. (Ephesians 5:22-33, ESV)*

Here we see in Paul's letter to the church in Ephesus, that marriage and the relationship between a husband and a wife refers to Christ and the church. Again as Paul says, this is a deep and profound mystery. A mystery, that Christians will never fully understand while we live on this earth. This is in part because all of our marriages are flawed and cannot compare with the Love of God. It is also due to the fact that we will only understand the fullness of God's work on the cross through His Son when we join Him in glory.

However, I do believe that Adam and Eve had a glimpse of what this looked like. In their marriage, they were able to communicate and speak directly to God and hear His response, at least for a short period of time. Because of sin we do not have this same relationship. We can speak directly to God, through Jesus our Mediator, but we do not have the privilege of hearing His response directly to us.

Paul lays out this beautiful description of how a husband and a wife are to act towards one another. He also lays out the way in which a household should function, not in a way that diminishes either the husband or wife. But rather, in such a way that the husband rules over his household as Christ rules over the church and so that the wife feels such love and joy poured upon her as to bring

forth respect and trust, just as the body (the redeemed) has for Jesus our Savior.

This passage does not merely call women to submit to their husbands, but instead calls them to submit to their husbands as their husbands love them as Christ would. If men truly desire to love their wives they will bury their faces in immense fountains of God's grace pouring forth from His never ending love for His children.

Another key thing that we see here is the correlation between the callings of elders/overseers, that we examined already and individual families. With the passage that we examined that discusses the qualifications of being an elder in the church we saw all of the ways that a man must set himself apart. Here in this passage we see that men are not only called and set apart to be elders in the church, but they are also called to lead, teach, love, and guide their wives, and thereby their children, in the truth of Scripture. Just as Christ cleanses and washes His church in order to present her as blameless on the day of judgment, so also every man is called to do for his wife and family:

*If the heart be chiefly and directly fixed on God,  
and the soul engaged to glorify him, some degree  
of religious affection will be the effect and*

*attendant of it. But to seek after affection directly and chiefly; to have the heart principally set upon that; is to place it in the room of God and his glory. If it be sought, that others may take notice of it, and admire us for our spirituality and forwardness in religion, it is then damnable pride; if for the sake of feeling the pleasure of being affected, it is then idolatry and self-gratification.*  
 — Jonathan Edwards, *The Life and Diary of David Brainerd*

Edwards hits upon an issue with this statement that rings true not only in relation to religious affections, but also in accordance with general affections that we may receive or seek in our marriages. If we place the affection of our spouse as the primary thing that we seek in our marriage, then we have completely missed the mark and are worshipping our spouse rather than our God.

This leads us into the discussion of how our love should be shown to one another in our marriages. It is not something that is merely given by choice or desire. Love, the only thing that is actually love is shown to our spouse through the deep searching that we experience in our attempt to learn more about God. If you are not seeking



God's Truth, then I can guarantee that you will not be able to love your husband or wife. If you are not completely submerged in the glories of God's majesty, then your spouse will only receive small pieces of the love that you desire, because of Christ, to shower upon them.

Men are supposed to love their wives as much as they love themselves. Men are not called to merely guide and direct through the teaching of Scripture, but rather must take upon themselves an attempt to love their wives. Actually love them. Remember the passage from 1 John? If you do you will remember that the only way to do this is through the love of Christ. Therefore, men are not called to love their wives on their own, for this is impossible. Rather, men are called to love their wives through Christ. By living as Christ has commanded, and speaking the truth that He has called for, then our wives will know what love is. If we show them Christ's love they will not just feel the sinful manipulative feelings of their spouse, but instead will feel the tender and warm embrace of the One who never sinned and who is the only One to love purely and wholly.

In discussing whom marriage is for, in the setting of gender roles and their place in our world today, we can see a few conclusions. These are not based upon public perception, sinful passions, or civil rights. They are based solely upon the truth of Scripture, unfettered by man's

sinful desire to hide their sins from the public and to deceive others. Mankind has distorted the meaning and purpose of marriage for so long that many people refuse to recognize Truth when they are faced with it. People refuse to acknowledge that God's Word is the ultimate foundation upon which every concept and thought must be tested. We cannot claim that we know better now than people did in the past, just because we want to claim that their viewpoints were old fashioned.

First, marriage is between one man and one woman. God created human beings uniquely intertwined and yet completely different. He created them male and female. We also have seen that God calls one man, Adam, to be joined together with Eve, one woman. In so doing we have the first marriage and example to follow. We also have seen that men are called to love their wives, and that they are to be the husband of one wife. This is directly against the current push in our culture. However, Scripture is very clear as to what marriage is and is not.

Second, marriage is meant to represent the relationship between Christ and the church. This cannot be done through relationships that do not follow the ordinances laid out for them in Scripture. This relationship is not reflected between those individuals who do not know what love is and therefore cannot express it. It is not reflected by those

who choose to distort their sexuality and thereby create a false image of what God created. Those who distort their sexuality not only spit in God's face, calling Him foolish for creating them the way that He has. They also attempt to lead a younger generation into sin as well, creating an even deeper punishment to be reserved for them upon the day of judgment.

Third, sinful man has no place in deciding who is and who should be married. As Christians we follow the laws of the land in order to submit to the rulers that God has placed in charge. However, when these rulers proclaim and submit regulations that are contrary to Scripture, they are not to be followed. We cannot contend that marriage is supposed to show the relationship between Christ and the church. Then with our next breath call something marriage that has no place to be called such and in fact distorts and destroys the picture that Paul paints for us in the book of Ephesians. God alone decrees what marriage is and decreed it from the very foundation of time. The very first human beings ever created were by God's command the very perfect and beautiful example of what marriage should be.

God presented Adam with the perfect counterpart, taken from his very own bone and flesh. In His presentation of Eve, God takes the role of both father and conductor of the marriage ceremony. He gives Eve to Adam so that they


may become one and fill the earth through their rightful display of their marriage. He performs the ceremony in that He grants Adam and Eve the right and privilege to be joined to one another. He decreed for it to happen and then He caused it to happen. This is the same way that we are still married today. God decreed that we would get married to a certain person, if we have been called to marriage, and then He leads us to that place and time in order for our marriage to take place.

# GOD'S DESIGN FOR THE FAMILY

## 4

*"You contribute nothing to your salvation except  
the sin that made it necessary."*

*— Jonathan Edwards*

 When we think about a family we should be drawn to the design that has been provided to us by God. Anything that does not represent this familial design should cause us to ponder how it has been distorted and how it should look through God's design.

The first thing that we see in Scripture is that a family is to be one man and one woman who seek to fill the earth. This means that a family should have children in it as seen in Ephesians:

*Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land." Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:1-4, ESV)*

Now, there are circumstances that arise that do not allow some men and women to conceive children. I am not saying that these individuals are not a family. Rather, I am stating that God's call to a married man and women is to have children to help fill the earth and to raise them in such a way as to express God's beauty and mercy to them and His glory to those around us. Solomon proclaims this beautifully in the book of Psalms. He says:

*Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD,  
the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the*

*hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth.  
 Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them!  
 He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with  
 his enemies in the gate. (Psalm 127:3-5, ESV)*

Some people might argue that having children is not something that everyone can do, that some people just are not cut out for that sort of thing. I would ask; why? Has not the Lord provided them with the organs to create life? Does He not say that He will provide for and give grace to those who trust in Him?

Part of the issue that we face today is that people think that their lives are more important than having children. They think that their jobs are more important to their wellbeing than having children. I can tell you from personal experience that Solomon is right. Children are a blessing and gift from God that allow us to see more of the grace that we have been shown even though we do not deserve it.

Some people think that providing care for those, specifically children, who are in need is something that only certain people can do or are called to do. There are more orphans in this world than people can even imagine and yet so many people still refuse to grasp and understand what it means to love and care for others. The current

statistics state that there are at least 147 million orphans living throughout the world (147 Million Orphans, 2015).

Speaking about orphans leads into the discussion about the different types of families that may exist within God's familial design. We see all throughout Genesis, as well as the rest of Scripture, that women become pregnant and then give birth to children. We can clearly see a lineage for many of the key individuals in the story that God has laid out for us. Therefore, the first type of family that can be seen is that which has a direct blood relation and shares the same DNA. This is the type of family that most would refer to as "natural" or "common".

However, the second type of family is strangely different. It speaks towards an ability to love something which is not your own. A family that does not share the same DNA or heritage and yet is still a familial design set forth by God. This design is much different from the "common" or "natural" familial designs. The second familial design proclaims a love for something that does not naturally belong and a desire to care for one who is not of the same heritage or bloodline. This design is what most would refer to as being a forever family. Not only is it a new start for children that have been left without a family, but it is also the final safe haven for those children. They can finally begin to see and realize what it means to have a



forever family and home.

This design has been proclaimed loudly by God. It is that of adoption. If we cannot see that adoption has been ordered and proclaimed by God, then we are missing half of what it means to truly be a family. God designed the perfect family structure; one man, one woman, their children, and their grandchildren, and so forth. However, as we examined in Genesis, sin entered the world and the perfect design for a family immediately began to be distorted. Not only did we see Adam and Eve begin to hide in shame from their Creator and Heavenly Father as well as each other, but we also quickly see envy and murder come between Adam and Eve's sons Cain and Able.

If we are to proclaim that God ordains families then we must also demonstrate such things. Because of Jesus' work on the cross, all those who put their faith and trust in Him have been adopted by God the Father. They are no longer looked at as sinners in need of wrath, but rather as sons and daughters of the Most High God.

How can we understand this and then turn and condemn millions of children to live in fear, hunger, despair, and sorrow? How can we justify such actions when we have been given so much? I would like to assert that we cannot! We have no excuse for not taking in orphans,

clothing them, feeding them, and providing for their needs in a new and forever home:

*Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world. (James 1:27, ESV)*

There are many different ways in which orphans can be cared for. The primary goal of anyone who attempts to provide care for an orphan should be that they become united with a forever family, are loved, and cared for just as those who are born with the same DNA. For, is this not the reason that we share the gospel? The adoption of physical children shouts forth with the exclamation that God is good and cares for those whom He has called unto Himself. The adoption of children shows us the manner by which Christians have been adopted spiritually.

So many times I have heard the excuse that people do not have the funds or resources to adopt or care for an orphan. Those same people then turn around and spend said lack of resources on other worldly things. This excuse is merely an attempt to make one-self feel better for turning away from something that God has commanded His

children to do.

Now, I am not saying that everyone does have the funds or resources to adopt. However, I am saying that any excuse that is made for why you do not care for the orphans of the world is in fact a sin. How many of us buy new gadgets or technological toys? How many of us go out to eat or take expensive trips? How many of us spend money just because we have it?

While all of the things aforementioned are not bad in and of themselves, there is something wrong with the way that so many approach the issue of orphans and adoption. Instead of seeking out ways that we can care for those children in need we make excuses as to why our money or resources are more important or needed by us. Instead of donating to causes that provide love and care to children we pour our resources into earthly pleasures that fade away.

Everyone cannot provide a forever family for the orphans of the world. I understand this and I am not saying that everyone should or has to. However, I am saying that everyone who calls Jesus Lord has been called upon to care for them. In what ways and with what resources they do so, that is between them and the Lord. But we cannot merely sit by while children around the world are left without care and love. This is a love that we have been shown by our

Father who is in heaven that we do not deserve in any way, shape or form.

Therefore, in examining the design that God has provided for what a family should look like, we can see that there are three different options. These are the only options that we find laid out for us in Scripture. There may be slight variations on each of the three, but their basis should remain the same.

First, to care for and raise children granted to parents through the grace of God. It is a blessing from the Lord to care for children and to bring them into the world. He has given the gift of life and we are to nurture it and help our children to grow to the best of our abilities. Will anyone ever raise their children perfectly? Of course not, for we are mere sinners. However, God will give grace to those who seek His face in order to grant them wisdom.

The second example would be to care for and raise those children that God has brought through His mercy to parents. This is to say that those families that cannot have children of their own DNA but have graciously opened their hearts and homes to those in need of love and shelter, or for the families who have children of their own DNA and still open their homes to those in need of forever families. They should understand that God has brought

those children to them and that He has ordained their situation in order to shine forth His glory the brightest.

Do we not gain a clearer picture of what it means to be adopted by God because there are orphans in the world that we can adopt or help to see adopted? As horrible as it is that there are orphans in the world, it is through their situation that God opens the eyes of many to bring them unto His side and to minister to their souls.

The third and last example is to care for those children through monetary means when we are unable to do so physically. If we cannot bring children in to our home for one reason or another, we must become involved in helping others to do so. Can we not forgo simple worldly pleasures in order to shine eternal splendors upon those who cling to the hope that there is someone who loves them somewhere in this world?

My dear brothers and sisters, this is the very essence of the gospel. There is hope for the hopeless, peace for the restless, and mercy for the needy. May we rise up to instill wisdom in our children and the children that we interact with throughout our days. May we cause them to learn verses such as these:

*Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and*

*forsake not your mother's teaching, for they are a graceful garland for your head and pendants for your neck. (Proverbs 1:8-9, ESV)*

Should this not be the cry of our hearts as we yearn to bring joy and mercy to those desperately in need? Should we not long to bring parents into the lives of those who have none? We need to show those who are orphans that there is one who will never leave or forsake those who place their trust in Him. One who will never treat them poorly, never abuse them, and will never seek their harm for His interests. Our God is gracious beyond our comprehension:

*Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the*

*field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. (Matthew 6:25-34, ESV)*

Since we have been adopted into the family of God, we should treat our brothers and sisters in the Lord as such. They are our family, in some cases more so than our physical and DNA linked families. The Lord binds those together in His covenant in a way that we can only begin to understand through looking at the act of worldly physical adoption.

There are however some things that we have been called upon to do as parents. Men should train their sons to behave in such a way as to bring honor and praise upon their families and to the Lord. Women should likewise train their daughters to carry themselves with all respect and reverence for the things of God. In doing such they will bring glory to God and cause those who observe their daughters to proclaim that the Lord is good:

*A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, and favor is better than silver or gold. The rich and the poor meet together; the LORD is the maker of them all. The prudent sees danger and hides himself, but the simple go on and suffer for it. The reward for humility and fear of the LORD is riches and honor and life. Thorns and snares are in the way of the crooked; whoever guards his soul will keep far from them. Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it. (Proverbs 22:1-6, ESV)*



# THE DESTRUCTION OF GOD'S FAMILIAL DESIGN

## 5

*"They will readily change truth for error, who  
find no more sweetness in the one than in the  
other."*

*— John Owen*

There are three current issues that seem to be plaguing the church. The first is that of divorce and the effects that it has on the theology and structure of the familial design. The second belongs to the LBGT community and their agenda. While the third involves parts of what is known as abortion.

I would like first like to speak towards the issue of divorce and what its rampant approval has done to the family. God did not design marriage to be something that could be broken and torn apart. It was designed to shine a light into the providential plan of God made manifest through His Son.

In the Old Testament there is an example of divorce given to Moses. However, this was not in order to provide the nation of Israel with blueprints on what should be done, but rather it was to provide them with instructions on how they were to approach the matter in extreme circumstances where the people of Israel needed something to go by as a nation.

This was not the design of God to have people divorcing one another, but rather it was an example of how to handle the issue within the context of a physical nation:

*And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they*

*are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.” They said to him, “Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?” He said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.” (Matthew 19:3-9, ESV)*

I have always thought about this passage when I hear about couples or individuals advocating for divorce within the church. It seems interesting that they can claim that God allows for divorce and that Christians should divorce one another when this passage clearly states that the only reason that divorce was ever provided by God was due to the hardness of the hearts of the nation of Israel.

By claiming that Christians should be able to divorce one another, those same people are readily throwing themselves into the same group as the Pharisees and those in the Old Testament who had hard hearts. I cannot see how this would be the group that one should willingly join or become a part of. It is a group of people who despise the

commands of God and are filled with excuses as to why they do not have to follow them.

In this passage from Matthew we see Jesus say that two people will become one flesh. If we truly believe this, then how can we even begin to think that it is possible for divorce to even happen? It is impossible for something that is one flesh to be separated. The fact that they are of one flesh means that they are one in the eyes of God. Therefore, there is no possible way by which they could separate from each other. Something that is one cannot be separated into two separate things:

*To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife should not separate from her husband (but if she does, she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife. (1 Corinthians 7:10-11, ESV)*

It would be like mixing water and gasoline together and then claiming that you can un-mix them just because you now do not like the taste of the water. You cannot merely make an excuse that you do not want to be married to someone anymore and then think that your lazy selfish

excuse releases you from an oath that you swore before the Lord.

Due to the manner that the church has approached this issue, we see many things. We see children misunderstanding what it means to be loved by their parents and their Savior. We see parents hating each other rather than working to become reconciled to one another. We see pastors claiming that divorce is normal, and thereby belittling the actions and works of Jesus in relation to His relationship with His bride.

The only thing that we see coming out of a culture of divorce is pain, hurt, and misery. The leading cause, and I would argue the only cause for divorce, is sin. The sin of adultery, hatred, pride, selfishness, envy, and lust are among the list of sins that lead to divorce. We cannot begin to condone something that directly spits in the face of God's design for how we are to live.

The "church" has claimed that adultery is ok and people should not feel ashamed for going through it. Yet, Paul states that those who have a spouse leave them, should remain unmarried or become reconciled to their spouse. This is a key issue when understanding divorce and its relationship to the church.

It boils down to one important issue. How can

someone who claims to be a Christian forgive and love their brother or sister in Christ and yet hate them enough to desire to see the greatest earthly commitment they can make destroyed for their own selfish desires? I would contend that it is impossible to do so.

Therefore those who would contend that divorce is a path that they can take and that Christians have the right to take are merely saying that you can be a Christian and yet refuse to live in such a way as to proclaim that faith to the very person whom you should love and care the most about.

The second issue, in many ways, resembles the first. It portrays actions that are contrary to nature and design as being those which would bring joy and pleasure to those who participate in them. Much like the effects that divorce has on the family, the LBGT community continues to bring about calamity and destruction within the family.

The current culture would like us believe that the issues surrounding the LBGT community and its supporters are on the same level as women's rights and the civil rights movement. This is hardly the case and causes people to see those other issues in a negative and sinful light.

The women's rights movement enabled half of the population to be able to vote and to express their opinions

through elections. Something that is not forbidden in Scripture and allows women to be viewed in a light that caused, in many ways, women to be seen completely differently within culture. Instead of not having valid opinions or being able to learn women were given the opportunity to vote, express their thoughts and ideas, and to learn whatever they chose to.

The civil rights movement helped to create equality amongst human beings. It began as a movement that helped to free our country of many of the hateful and destructive segregations that only manifested the hideous nature of sin and the effects that it has on those who remain captive to it. This movement was an attempt to bring to light the fact that God creates all people for His glory and not just one people group. It shined a great light on the fact that God has chosen for Himself people of every nation, tribe, tongue, and people group.

The LBGT movement on the other hand is killing families, the ability to live as God designed, and individual rights. The women's and civil rights movements sought to bring rights that God has given to every human being to every human being. The LBGT movement seeks to deny certain individuals their rights, all while claiming to be attempting to bring "rights" to themselves.

Instead of creating rights for themselves, they are merely distorting the created order. No one has the right to take something that God has created and turn it into something “contrary to nature”. (Romans 1:26 ESV) To claim something to be your right that is in and of itself sinful is to completely spit in the face of God and to claim a deeper intelligence than your Creator. There is a term that best describes this, blasphemy. To claim that a distortion of God’s natural created order is the right that you have is, to quote Martin Luther, “neither right nor safe.” Just because certain individuals would like us to believe that it is their right to act a certain way, does not make it true.

For example, a murderer would like you to believe that he has the right to kill someone because of something that they did or did not do to him. Does this then mean that we should be campaigning for the rights of murders to be able to kill whomever they wish? God forbid! We should never approve sin, no matter how much the sinful world wants us to.

Another example would be that there is no punishment for adultery in the United States. Does this mean then that times have changed and therefore we should go around and sleep with as many people as we can to gain “valuable experience?” Absolutely not! The Bible very clearly lays out for us the sin and punishment that comes with adultery.



So why then do some within the Christian community conclude that adultery is wrong and the things that those within the LGBT community are doing are not wrong? This attempt to justify the LGBT movement does not make sense when compared to Scripture. We cannot merely use the parts of Scripture that make us feel good, but we need to fully understand and follow what Scripture commands us to do. We cannot approve one person's sin and then disapprove another person's just because culture is trying to convince us to follow them down the wide and easy path. Instead we need to see that the path we must follow is more like that of Christian from Pilgrim's Progress by John Bunyan than the path that the majority of people we come across will claim is the correct path:

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith." For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can*

*be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one*

*another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them. (Romans 1:16-32, ESV)*

There is so much in this passage that needs to be examined and understood. The first thing is this. Those who have faith in Jesus Christ receive righteousness and those who do not have faith in Jesus receive wrath. This is a key difference to see when examining this passage. Christians live by faith, and grow through the faith that God provides to them. Christians are not able to live under wrath, because Christ has already paid for their sins. This is

why they live by faith.

Unrepentant sinners live under God's wrath. No one has paid for their sins and they will receive the due punishment for them. The second thing that we should note is that God's wrath is poured out on all those who are ungodly and unrighteous. Those who live such a life not only reject God, but they also try to suppress the truth about Him. Paul is making this claim in order to show the amount of hatred that the unrepentant sinner has towards God. That they not only live in such a way that His wrath is poured upon them, whether that is now or at the end of time, but they also attempt to keep the truth of God from others.

How can we make this claim? Paul makes this claim using the parts of Genesis that we have already examined. Namely, that the creation exclaims and shines forth the beauty, majesty, and the divineness of God. Paul says that it is plain to those who are unrighteous. Not only can they see God's divine nature through the creation, it is plain to them. Yet, they ignore and attempt to hide it. It is for this reason that wrath is poured upon them, because they refused to acknowledge their Creator as such. Instead of marveling in the beauty of God's creative power and honoring Him as the Creator of the universe should be, they became fools and created for themselves images of mortal man and animals to worship.

The next part of this passage is extremely important. Because the unrighteous live in such a way as to reject God, He gives them over to their hearts desires. Therefore, everything that follows is a complete disregard for the truth, righteousness, and the Creator. We see that God gives people over to the desires that they have, sinful desires that only He can keep them from. He is not telling them to do something that they do not want to do. Rather, to give someone over to their desires means that God will not hold them back from their desires any longer. This is an act of the judgement of God being poured out upon them for their active rebellion against Him and His decrees.

Men and women exchange relations that are natural for those that are contrary to nature and are consumed with those relations. We have already examined what is natural and according to God's decree. Therefore, it is easy to see what the opposite of that is. Because people commit shameful acts with others of the same sex, God gives them over to all sorts of horrendous acts and desires. Even though they know what God has decreed as the manner in which to live and act, they do not care and they deserve to die. Even knowing that by doing these horrible acts they give approval to others that do them as well. To me this perfectly describes the LBGT community. They have rejected God, His created order, His design for families,

and they have proclaimed that everyone else who does so will be praised and set upon a pedestal to be adored and praised.

By not following God's created order, the LGBT community has declared that they know how to live better than their Creator does. They claim that they know how they should have been created instead of how they actually were. They are unable to follow one of God's very first commands, to be fruitful and to multiply. Those who have forsaken God's designed order for things cannot bear children in the manner that God designed. In their order, men do not leave their parents to be joined to their wives. They do not become one flesh, because they are not joined together in the manner by which God created them to be. They constantly reject God, and live only according to their own fleshly desires.

Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, writes in I Timothy about those who practice homosexuality in the same paragraph as murderers, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and the sexual immoral. Many people that are in or back the LGBT community try to claim that the mention of homosexual behavior should merely fit into sexual immorality. That is if homosexuality is indeed a sin. This is just a ridiculous argument, for a couple of reasons. If that is your argument, then it is clearly and easily still seen as sin.

Second, why would Paul single it out when writing to Timothy if it was not supposed to be singled out as something that the church was dealing with even during the first century? If it does not specifically mean homosexual behavior, then what does it mean? It is set apart from sexual immorality, which would cover a multitude of different things because Paul wants to make sure that everyone knows that it is also a sin and should be included amongst sinful accounts.

The LBGT camp wants to claim that they are the one seeking rights and that those who oppose them are narrow minded and bigoted. However, by very definition of those terms they contradict themselves. Instead of allowing Christians to say what they want and to proclaim that what they are doing is sin, they call them hateful and ignorant. Instead of allowing people to openly discuss an issue, they claim that you must use their terms and ideas and not your own. Is this not then the very definition of being narrow minded and bigoted? So much so that instead of Christians actually being hateful and narrow minded, many who oppose the LBGT movement are loving and are merely calling sinners to repent. By telling someone that they must think a certain way that is contrary to Scripture, they are claiming that they are wiser than God and should be obeyed more than the Ruler of the universe.

How can we even begin to contemplate that the LGBT movement is a good thing when we have been called to multiply and fill the earth? If we truly believe this to be one of the callings that God has placed on the family. Then we cannot begin to think that this movement is in any way beneficial to families. They claim that they merely want the same rights as those who live according to God's mandate from Genesis. Yet, they refuse to acknowledge that the world population would completely die off under their system of thinking. Women cannot have children with women and men cannot have children with men. This just is not the way that God designed the human body to function and work. He designed men to be joined to women only. Not with other men, not with men pretending to be women, and not with animals.

One may wonder why animals have been included in this discussion. It is because once you begin to follow the train of thinking that sexuality is fluid or decided upon by a single person's choice, you begin to have people that would rather have a "relationship" with an animal or pet that they "love". By being given over to their own debased desires, they can concoct any line of thinking that makes them "happy". While the only true happiness can be found through salvation in Jesus Christ, many people continue to seek for it in every avenue of life.



A family was designed by God to be a beautiful picture of the relationship that Christians have with God. While sin has taken every part of the earthly human family and caused it to be distorted and hollow at times, the LBGT community has taken the idea of family and has attempted to use it to lead people astray from the truth of Scripture. Just as Paul says in Romans chapter one, we can see that the only reason that people do not worship God is because they refuse to acknowledge Him as Creator. If they were to acknowledge Him as Creator, then they would have to acknowledge that they were created a certain way. This they refuse to do and in turn refuse to worship the only One that deserves to actually be worshipped.

This leaves us with one prominent issue to discuss. This issue is one that has seen much discussion over the years as well as having perpetrated much sorrow and grief. Every year there are thousands of babies that are murdered right here in the United States. That issue is abortion and while it has been termed something different, so that those who encounter it can attempt to tell themselves that it is not really murder, it is in fact murder.

If we truly believe that God creates and sustains all life as we have examined. How can we claim that some life is not really life? That some lives have been created wrongly by God. If we believe David that he was wonderfully

created in his mother's womb by God, then how are these children any different?

They are not. As we looked at in earlier chapters, the only reason that any life exists, is that God has given life to that thing. Whether that is an animal, a tree or plant, or human beings, He has given all things life. He is the Author of all life, all faith, and all hope. We have the perfect example of how a baby can interact with the world, even in the womb with the example of John the Baptist:

*In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. (Luke 1:39-44, ESV)*

There are those that have risen up within the church to state that while they believe that abortion is sinful, they would make exceptions. This is much in the same way that those who make excuses for divorce have already tried to compel those within the church to see their viewpoint. However, if we believe that God is the Giver and Taker of life. That He has numbered our days. Then we will echo with Job:

*Man who is born of a woman is few of days and full of trouble. He comes out like a flower and withers; he flees like a shadow and continues not. And do you open your eyes on such a one and bring me into judgment with you? Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? There is not one. Since his days are determined, and the number of his months is with you, and you have appointed his limits that he cannot pass, look away from him and leave him alone, that he may enjoy, like a hired hand, his day. (Job 14:1-6, ESV)*

We have a limited number of days that we will live. But they are not determined by our choice, they are predestined by God. Since every life is created by God,

how can we allow people to make exceptions in order to murder those who cannot defend themselves? In reference to children in the womb Solomon said:

*As you do not know the way the spirit comes to the bones in the womb of a woman with child, so you do not know the work of God who makes everything. (Ecclesiastes 11:5, ESV)*

The very children that we are called to care for and raise unto the Lord. Those are the ones that they would claim need to be disposed of. Instead of training children in the ways of the Lord, they would assert that there are times when instead of training children, we should kill them.

I know that there are times when someone becomes pregnant and it was due to undesirable and painful circumstances, such as rape. However, we cannot throw out the truth that God is the giver of all life. Therefore even a life that comes from such an event is not one that was a mistake on the part of God. If we believe that it is a mistake, then God is not sovereign.

No matter how evil a circumstance is, or where that situation came from, God is on His throne and is in control. It is as Spurgeon once said:

*Men will allow God to be everywhere but on his throne. They will allow him to be in his workshop to fashion worlds and make stars. They will allow Him to be in His almonry to dispense His alms and bestow his bounties. they will allow Him to sustain the earth and bear up the pillars thereof, or light the lamps of heaven, or rule the waves of the ever-moving ocean; but when God ascends His throne, His creatures then gnash their teeth. And we proclaim an enthroned God, and His right to do as He wills with His own, to dispose of His creatures as He thinks well, without consulting them in the matter; then it is that we are hissed and execrated, and then it is that men turn a deaf ear to us, for God on His throne is not the God they love. But it is God upon the throne that we love to preach. It is God upon His throne whom we trust. — Charles Haddon Spurgeon*

We cannot begin to understand what it is exactly that God has planned for us, but we must realize that it is all part of His design. While He is neither author nor perpetrator of sin, He does use our sin for His glory and to further His kingdom. Even from the worst of circumstances comes the

beauty and majesty of God:

*But Joseph said to them, "Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones." Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them. (Genesis 50:19-21, ESV)*

The church must stand up against injustice. We must protect the family and the design that God has implemented for it. There are times when a single mother needs the help of her church. Instead of judging her and condemning her, maybe we should begin to understand why things are a certain way. Maybe it is that she placed her trust in God and received the gift of a child even though it cost her much pain and grief.

We need to proclaim that all life is precious. Not just the ones that make us feel comfortable. The modern church instead of teaching that all life is precious has made excuses for why certain women can kill their children while others cannot. This is one of the reasons why so many

people look at the church and see hypocrites instead of children of God.

There are so many stories of women who have chosen to have abortions after being raped and then have been consumed with the grief of their actions. Not only do they then have to deal with the sin and its effects of the one who committed this heinous act upon their body, but they also then have to deal with the fact that they killed their child. It is not just the aggressor's child, but it is in fact theirs as well. There have been so many women who fall into this category.

The church instead of counseling them to keep their child has in many cases decided that they know better than God and that these women should get rid of the reminder of what happened. This should make us sick to our stomachs. Not only do we see reasoning that places man's thoughts above God's, but we also see a thought process that if followed through could lead to many other sins against our Holy God.

On the other hand, there are those cases where a woman decided to keep a child conceived through rape. I would never contend that rape is something good, please hear me when I say that. However, if we truly believe as Joseph did that evil that comes our way will be used by

God for our good, then we must look at something like rape as an opportunity to be blessed by God.

I am not saying by any means that the act of rape is a blessing. However, I do believe that Scripture says that all things are for our good. If we trust in God for our care we should look for the blessings that come through affliction. I remember reading a story recently about a woman who decided to keep her child and later proclaimed that her child was the greatest gift that she had ever received. She said that God knew there would be a time when the sinful act that orchestrated the conception of her child would be looked upon as the means that God used to bring joy and happiness to both of their lives.

She was joining with Paul when he said:

*Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For*



*those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. (Romans 8:26-30, ESV)*

Abortion is not to be taken lightly. I am not saying that there are circumstances where all hope seems lost to those involved in a situation. I am however saying that our God is in control, and even though the modern “church” in the United States has failed to come alongside those in need, there is hope.

God’s design for families must remain the base point by which we create and interact with our families. We cannot change the guidelines because we are involved in a circumstance that we do not like at the time. God must remain the hope that we offer to those in need. Abortion has destroyed the lives of many and is based upon one of the most basic of sins, selfishness. The life of one is valued over the life of another.




## WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?

# 6

*"For to speak the truth, there are but few  
that care thus to spend their time, but choose  
rather to be speaking of things to no profit."*

*— John Bunyan*

 When we talk about the issues surrounding gender and the ways that individuals have been created, what do we hope to accomplish? Do we merely want to hear ourselves talk so that we can pat ourselves on the back thinking that we have accomplished some great task for the kingdom? Do we want to prove that

we are right just so we can win a specific argument? Do we want to make sure that people know that we are holy? Or is the reason that we fight and argue for the truth so that those who are living in sin can hear and come to know peace and forgiveness only to be found in Jesus Christ?

I pray with all my heart that it is the latter. If we are not seeking truth in love and calling for repentance just as we have done and continue to do, then we are not caring for those with whom we come in contact in the way that Jesus has called us to. How many people that are involved with the LGBT movement come from broken homes? How many of those broken homes have we invested in and come to their aid? There are thousands that come from broken homes and there are thousands that no one has even batted an eye at in regards to their physical and spiritual well-being:

*Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and*

*not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing. If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world. (James 1:19-27, ESV)*

How many times have you heard about a family going through a divorce and done nothing just because you didn't want to get involved in something so personal? Or how many times have you heard about the young single mother who got pregnant and was turned away by her family because of it and you merely wanted to avoid her so that you didn't have to answer your own children's questions about where the child's father was?

It should make us sick to realize how much we have failed our church families, communities, towns, country, and world. Instead of the church being a bulwark for the truth, standing up for those in need, or caring for the “old lady” down the street. We have turned a blind eye to the truth, neglected children in need, and complained about the elderly not doing enough to help out or being in the way.

The church has created the problem that we are now facing. If the church had stood for what was right and what God commanded, then there would not be any orphans. As soon as a child became an orphan a family would take them in as their own. There wouldn't be any widows that went uncared for. They would either be married again or cared for by the church. There would be a perfect example of what a true family looks like.

Husbands would love their wives. Wives would submit to their husbands. Children would obey their parents. And the church would shine forth with a light and brilliance that has never been seen. However, the church has not done this and it has caused some serious side effects.

Husbands despise their wives and commit adultery against them, failing to lead them in a way that shows Christ's love. Wives hate the fact that their husbands rule over them and attempt to deceive them in order to gain

more control over the things that they think they will bring them joy. Children hate that their parents are in charge and have rules for them to follow. They act upon visions of hatred and deception at every turn that they can. They are not sweet and innocent. Rather they use the fact that they are a child to gain advantage over those caring for them.

These things that exist within the church have their root in sin. However, the church cannot merely claim ignorance or condemn sin without looking at itself to see that the root lies in its actions and deeds amongst the communities in which they live. The church as a whole has failed to address sin as such and has created an environment wherein sin dwells and thrives.

It seems like an immense mountain of trouble and grief, one which the church has been called to address head on. In order to fix the problem we cannot merely attempt to move forward and turn a page. We first must repent of the ways that we have played a part in the tragedies that have befallen many churches. We must admit that we are not perfect and need God's grace every single day. It is then and only then, that we can begin to restore brothers and sisters in Christ and to call those who are living in sin to repent and fall on their knees before the throne of the One who can forgive. If we do not first hold fast to Scripture as the baseline by which we live and die, then we will

continue to fall into sin, help create sin, and promote the sin of others.

Once the church takes ownership of its deeds and beliefs, then we must call for a complete and utter surrender from those who continually live in sin, “claiming to be wise”<sup>2</sup> but are in fact the most foolish of people. There are so many things that need to be done for the church to stand pure and undefiled, many of which will not happen until Jesus comes again. However, there are still many issues that need to be dealt with today, without any more hesitation. Sin needs to be called sin and repentance needs to be called for on every level where sin exists. Pastors need to preach the truth no matter who it offends and the church needs to stand behind their pastors in order to provide them with the support that they so desperately need.

There is no quick fix, no easy way out. The church, the true church, is in for an immense struggle. One in which Satan, and everything that he stands for, is going to pour out as much evil and strife upon those who believe the truths of the Bible as he possibly can. However, we serve a great God who has conquered the grave, death, and evil. It is through this truth that the church must stand. Stand, take

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<sup>2</sup> Romans 1:22, ESV



the full force of what Satan throws at us and then come through the other side stronger and more glorified than ever before. God will purify His church and He may use many of the issues surrounding gender to do so.

If the church does not begin to take ownership of the things that they need to, specifically relating to the roles of men and women within the church and families, we will never begin to see an answer to the problem:

*Every child of God is not called by the Lord to establish schools and orphan houses and to trust in the Lord for means for them. Yet, there is no reason why you may not experience, far more abundantly than we do now, His willingness to answer the prayers of His children. — George Müller*

There are over 147 million orphans in the world. Yes that is right, 147 million. This is an astronomical number to even begin to think about. In 2014 the United States had 319 million people living within its borders. That means that there were most likely enough families within the United States to take in all of the orphans in the whole world. This breaks my heart to think about. Not only do we

see the number of orphans continue to grow, but we also see the number of families continue to grow with no help or support given to those who are so desperately in need.

The number of orphans does not even include the widows and the elderly. How many more millions would we see that need care and attention then? Why don't we then take our money and pour it into furthering God's kingdom through one of the commands that He directly gave to us?

Instead of building multi-million dollar churches, why don't we build simple buildings that will allow many to hear the gospel and use the rest of the money to take in orphans, to help care for the widows, and to provide care for the elderly?

Here in the United States we would rather have comfortable seats and air conditioning so that we can be comfortable while listening to a sermon, rather than take some time out of our week to bring a mother a meal so that she can better provide for her children.

We would rather make sure that we have the top of the line sound equipment so that we can make sure people enjoy music for a few hours on Sunday morning, rather than take a child into our homes that desperately desires for someone, anyone to show them love.

We would rather make sure that our kids have all the programming that they could want, rather than going to spend some time with someone who just wants to tell you a story and visit for a few minutes. The church in the United States is extremely conceited and greedy.

This is how we can attempt to bring about some change within our culture. In order to reform the way that people think about gender roles and the ways that God has created His creation, we must first address the foundation that is riddled with cracks and holes.

By reaching out to those who have no parents, we begin to show them the love the God the Father has for those who love Him. We can begin to show them that we have been adopted, just as they have. We can show them that we needed love and craved it, just as much as they did. That even though their earthly parents have not lived up to the picture that they have imagined, Jesus will never fail and always lives up to whatever we can ever imagine.

By reaching out to the widowed, we can begin to show them that even through death God provides for those who He loves. That Christ's love will never die and He will always be with them because He conquered death and rose from the grave. We can show them that they do not have to raise their children on their own, that there are people in the

church willing to help out and to lend a hand when needed.

By reaching out to the elderly the church can begin to grow in wisdom and knowledge. It can begin to see what it means to live a life fully devoted to the Lord until the end. The church can begin to see that wisdom is relayed from one generation to another through the infinite wisdom of God. The church would grow in respect and understanding within its individual families because of the manner by which those who are advanced in their years are treated.

My prayer is that the church would begin to realize the areas where it needs to change and the actions that it can express in order to show that change. It will only happen by God's grace and guidance, as He leads us to repentance and prayer, to live by faith as we walk in the truth for His glory and for the good of others. By faith we believe that change can happen, because God is greater than all our sin.

We have been called to proclaim the glory of God to the world, why then do we struggle so much with sharing it with our neighbors? Our mindset must be one where the only thing that we desire to do is God's will, no matter what the earthly cost is to us. Simply, the way by which we will affect change and bring about a new perspective and view of life is to preach the gospel and to follow the commands that God has laid out for us in Scripture:

*For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. (Romans 10:13-17, ESV)*

We need to invest in our communities. How many churches take the time to clean their community or to invest in projects that would benefit the needs of those living in it? How many churches would rather add coffee shops to their buildings in order to draw more people in rather than providing meals for those who are in need. Instead of catering to our own selfish desires for comfort, we need to bring the gospel to our communities and reach out to them in ways that they have never experienced.

We need to show those who are seeking help with

unplanned pregnancies that the life growing inside of them is a gift from God. Instead of shunning them or making them feel like the child growing in their womb is something terrible, we need to help them to hear it's heartbeat, to see it's formation of hands and feet.

The church needs to stand against injustice. It must rise up and take control of the things that it has the power to control and to give those things which it does not to the Lord. There are so many things that we can do to proclaim the gospel to our communities and I believe that they all flow from having a correct understanding of what a family should be and how it should live.

Without the family we cannot explain the gospel in a way that is understandable. How can we begin to explain adoption unto salvation or becoming children of God through the work of Jesus on the cross if we cannot even relay what adoption is and should look like or what being a child to a parent actually should mean.

God has graciously laid out for us what a family should look like. He has given us the blueprint to share the gospel with those around us. We must understand that there is a reason why He chose to relay His relationship with us through that of a family. By understanding how a family should look and striving to emulate that understanding, we

can only then begin to understand the true depth and love of God. It is then that we will understand what it means to be called sons and daughters of the Most High. It is then that we will see God's design for how men and women are to interact with one another through marriage, families, and the church.





## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

There are several things that I would claim to be in this world. I am a father, a husband, a son, a brother, and an aspiring author. Most importantly, I am a child of the King of kings and Lord of lords. It is through His mercy that I live and breathe and all praise and glory must always go to Him.

I live in Western Pennsylvania with my wife Bethany and two children Quilan and Aisling. Quilan is almost two and Aisling is only a few months old. The Lord has been extremely gracious in allowing me to experience life with children and I cannot thank Him enough for that blessing.

If not for Jesus I would be lost in my sin with no hope at all. Thankfully the Lord chose me and saved me from myself. Before the foundation of the world my name was written in the book of life and there is nothing that I can do to fall away from Him that He hasn't already paid for on the cross. It is because of His sacrifice that I write and attempt to relay His glories to others.

I come from a long and cherished tradition amongst protestant Christianity and desire to share my thoughts about the God we worship with all those who wish to hear. I deeply enjoy learning from those who have gone before us in faith. Without their guiding and teachings I would not know my Lord in the way that I do. It is because of their insight into the mind of God that I have even begun to see the depths of His majesty and grace.

I pray that this book was a blessing to your life and hope that you will tell others about it as well. I would love to hear any feedback that you might have after reading this work. You can get in touch with me through email at [stephen.lukens@gmail.com](mailto:stephen.lukens@gmail.com).

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