

“AND THEY SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH”

Text: Genesis 2:18-25

INTRO: On the 5th day of creation, God made the birds & the creatures that live in the sea. On the 6th day He made the land animals and man, Gen. 1:20-28. Our text gives additional information, supplying details not mentioned in chapter 1. After God made Adam, He brought before Adam the different land animals & birds He had recently created, & instructed Adam to name them as he saw fit.

Some individuals assume from Gen 2:18-20 that woman was created as an after-thought. This is not the case at all. Gen 1:26-28 shows that God intended from the beginning for humans to populate the earth & exercise dominion over all other creatures. Most likely God’s bringing before Adam all the other creatures was meant to impress upon him the vast distinction between himself & the other created beings, & to make him more aware of the importance & value of the companion God was about to make for him.

The method in which Adam’s wife came into existence caused Adam to recognize an inseparable relationship with her. Being made from a part of his own body, she was literally, physically bone of his bone & flesh of his flesh. To have separated himself from her would have been to have put away a part of his very own self. The Hebrew word for man is ISH. The word for woman is ISHSHA (the word for man, with a feminine ending). Similarly the Eng word “woman” comes from the word man. Actually, the word “woman” comes from the Anglo-Saxon “wifman” or wife man.

The H.S. reveals that the principle of “bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh” is to be applied in the marriage relationships in succeeding generations. Note the word “therefore.” “Therefore a man shall leave his father & mother & be joined to his wife, & they shall become one flesh.”

Now, let us look more closely at vs 24, examining it in order.

- I. THEREFORE A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER & MOTHER.
 - A. This statement is not a part of what Adam said, but what God Himself said based on the truth Adam had re- cognized & stated. Jesus tells us it was “He who made them” who said, “For this reason...” MT 19:4-5.

- B. God intends for husbands & wives to be as closely united as were Adam & Eve.
- C. The husband/wife relationship takes precedence over any & all other human relationships. Married men and women still have certain obligations & responsibilities to their parents, 1 Tim. 5:16, but we need to recognize that the parent/child relationship is secondary to the husband/wife relationship.
- D. When I talk with couples about to marry, I counsel them: “If you are not willing to put this person ahead of your father & mother in your affections, & love him more than you love any other human being, do him a favor & don’t marry him.
- E. The commitment between husband and wife binds them together & in a sense separates them from all others.

II. “AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE”

- A. The major emphasis of the text is not the changing of the relationship with parents, but on establishing an even higher relationship with one’s spouse.
- B. Again, Jesus’ comment on this verse is helpful, that God Himself joins them together, Matt 19:6; Mark 10:9.
- C. When God has joined a man & woman in marriage, there can be no voiding of the responsibilities & restrictions of that relationship unless the God who joined them has released them from those responsibilities & restrictions. “Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.”

II. “AND THEY SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH”

- A. As Adam & Eve were made from one flesh to begin with, each husband & wife within a Scriptural marriage “becomes one flesh.” Other passages shed more light on this statement. The term “one flesh”

involves, but is not limited to, the sexual relationship that rightly exists within marriage, Gen. 2:25.

- B. Somewhere the idea has surfaced that the “forbidden fruit” of Eden was the sexual relationship. Nothing could be further from the truth. From the beginning, God told Adam & Eve to be fruitful & multiply & fill the earth, Gen.1:28.
- C. In the initial family relationship, God designed Eve to be a helper to Adam. The KJV’s expression “an help meet” is often misunderstood & sometimes even mispronounced as if it said “help mate.” She was a help mate, but that is not what God was saying. She was to be a helper who was “meet”—an outmoded way of saying suitable or comparable for Adam.
- D. A marriage will be more harmonious if the husband & wife are suited to each other spiritually, socially, culturally, etc., sharing life’s goals, aspirations, joys & sorrows; working together to build an atmosphere in which they rear their children & fight the storms of life together.
- E. To the extent that they are not united, the relationship is threatened.

Mark 3:23, If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

III. **THUS GEN 2:18-25 IS THE BACKBONE OF WHAT GOD HAS TO SAY ABOUT THE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP.** This is further underscored by the fact that this passage is quoted from no less than five times in later Bible passages.

- A. **MALACHI 2:15.** During the time the Jews spent in Babylonian exile many divorced their Jewish wives & contracted marriages with heathen women contrary to God’s laws, Deut 7:3; Ex 34:14-15.

1. These unlawful marriages caused their worship to be rejected, Mal. 2:13-14.
2. Regarding their Scriptural wives, God stated that He hates divorce, vs 16.
3. On the other hand, those marriages which were unlawful were to be dissolved, vs 11-14. Compare Ezra, chapters 9 & 10.

B. MATTHEW 19:4-6.

1. Jesus was asked by the Pharisees about the legality of divorce, they probably expected a dissertation of Deut 24:1-4. Instead Jesus went back to Gen 1:27 & 2:24 & emphasized the original desire & purpose of God in the marriage relationship.
2. Jesus emphasized that it was God who said, "A man shall leave his father & mother & be joined to his wife & the 2 shall become one flesh."
3. The Lord also pointed out, as Malachi had done that God Himself had "made them one." "Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."
4. As the Pharisees continued to press Him, He did address the subject of divorce. But for our present purpose suffice it to say that Jesus had much rather have us seek ways to complement & enhance our Scriptural spouses & have the oneness, unity, togetherness God intended rather than have us seek to find methods & excuses for destroying that relationship.

C. MARK 10:6-8. This is Mark's parallel account of the discussion between Jesus & the Pharisees. It adds nothing of significance other than to show that the

same principles apply to men & women alike. God does not have one marriage law for men & a different law for women.

D. EPHESIANS 5:30-31. When Paul sought to illustrate the kind of unity, fellowship & love that exist between Christ & His church, he centered his attention on the marriage relationship as God intended it to be.

1. As Christians we are members of Christ's body, vs 30
2. If we do harm to the body of Christ we are harming ourselves.
3. The same is true of the husband & wife. A man cannot hate his wife without being himself a recipient of that action. He cannot properly love his wife without he himself benefiting from that love. Their lives, needs, goals, etc., are so intertwined that, as Jesus said, "They are no longer two, but one flesh" (MT 19:5; MK 10:8).
4. Though Paul's primary lesson in Eph 5:22-23 deals with the relationship between Christ & His church, he also underscores the proper relationship between husbands & wives. Vs 33.

E. 1 CORINTHIANS 6:16. Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For "the two," He says, "shall become one flesh."

A. Of course, Paul is not saying that God sanctions an act of fornication, or joins the fornicators together as husband & wife.

B. He is simply pointing out that when a man goes in to a harlot he becomes a partaker of the same fornication of which she is guilty. He has accepted

for himself her moral standard. He shares her values & in that sense has become “one” with her.

CONCLUSION: And so we see that “from the beginning” to the present time, from ancient Eden to modern America, & from Adam to the end of the ages, God’s basic desires & purposes for the marriage relationship have not changed. As His words once rang out in the garden of Eden, they still chime clear in the New Testament Scriptures: “Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning made them male & female & said ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father & mother & be joined to his wife, & the 2 shall become one flesh’? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate” (Matt. 19:4-6).

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