

# Holy Matrimony, Part 2

A Bible Study for St. Paul's Lutheran  
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# Remember our goal along the way...

- We want to learn the main point of each biblical chapter on holy matrimony.
- So far, we have covered Genesis, chapter 1.
- Main message:
  - 1) God is US & OUR, so consider how the TRINITY who joins husband and wife loves. Love = extends self to the other. Words like “sacrifice” and “obedience” describe the Son to the Father.
  - 2) Consider the positional status of husband and wife. Based on the fact that both are made and renewed in the IMAGE of God, think of what this should produce: honor.

# What we learn from Genesis 1 therefore is vital for marriage:

- The first step is for our commitment not to be based on the world's version of love, but Genesis 1.
- Both aspects mentioned are objective...
  - 1) Love your spouse sacrificially not because they are so great or deserving or because you feel like it, but because the Trinity joined you to do the love the Trinity does.
  - 2) Honor your spouse not because they are candidates for parent of the year or because they are so considerate and kind, but because of their God-given status.
- \* These are objective realities that fall outside of personality and the relational dynamics. Similarly, parents are called to love their children regardless of how lovable they are at a given moment.

# OK, so how do we memorize Genesis 1 in a simple way?

- Try this:
- Genesis 1 =
  - 1) Like the Trinity (US/OUR) we extend ourselves to love our spouse as an act of service and sacrifice.
  - 2) Since our spouse is created and renewed in the IMAGE of God, we honor them for the position God gave them.

This Biblical objective approach saves you from the world's confusion:

- “When we have entered into marriage, God commands us to love one another. Love, from God’s point-of-view, is not the basis for marriage, but the issue or outcome of a successful marriage. It is far more subject to the will than we suppose. We help cultivate and develop love because we set our minds to do so.”  
(Christenson, *The Christian Family*, 29)

# Genesis 2

- The key verses:

Verse 18: ***“Then the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.’ (note: “helper fit for him” occurs again at verse 20)***

Verse 21: ***“So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.”***

Verse 22: ***“And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.”***

Verse 23: ***“Then the man said, ‘This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.’”***

Verse 24: ***“Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”***

# Genesis 2:18 (& 20)

1. “It is not good for the man to be alone.”

God’s desire is to address the condition of being alone. There are problems inherent in this condition (unless He gifts and wills celibacy) so God had the perfect solution...

2. “helper fit for him.”

The Hebrew word *ezer* (*helper*) has in some cases the sense of “assistant,” but here the words “fit for him” give us an additional sense of *ezer* in this context. *Ezer* can also be an “ally” and this word and idea is even applied to God (e.g. Psalm 70:5). In Genesis 2:18, the woman is fit for him like an opposite that perfectly complements and who is also an ally.

## *Ezer...*

- Interestingly, the word is used in terms of help in battle, and even in connection to battle implements like shields (Botterweck, Ringgren, and Fabry, *Theological Dictionary of The Old Testament*, Vol. XI, 14-16).
- As said before the word may be applied to the Lord.
- The sense is that in the midst of battle, this helper is so important that the helper may save your life!



That is, the *ezer* conducts a ministry:

- “As to the source of the help, this word is generally used to designate divine aid...it includes both material and spiritual assistance.”  
(Harris, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, Vol. II, 661)

## To get to the main point:

- The *ezer* is given to the man for Him to receive divine help; help that is so vital that it means the difference between success or failure; even life or death.
- This does not mean that the man is to idolize or treat the *ezer* as God, but it does mean that man should view the wife as a crucial gift from God that provides divine help without which he would terribly suffer.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 describes the practical implications of the idea:

- ***“Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him – a threefold cord is not quickly broken.”***

# The implications clarify the purpose of marriage:

- 1. The husband must literally view his wife as a gift from God. She is to him help sent from God. He should view her as indispensable. She is so precious and invaluable in providing the help he needs in life, that he puts her before all else (next to God). This helps explain later chapters we will consider where the man is to treat her tenderly.
- 2. The wife must literally view herself as being given a mission from the Lord to her husband. Part of her identity is her God-given role to give aid sent from God to bless her husband with help that is specialized and indispensable. This help could literally save his life. At the very least, she makes him stronger both in material and spiritual ways.

But is this an invitation to abuse roles? Not if you add verse 21-23:

- God puts man into a deep sleep.
- He will NEVER be able to take credit for the woman.
- The woman was taken from the man, ***but she comes from the Lord! She is from the work of God alone, but it is a work that demonstrates that she is of the same substance as the man. Therefore...***

## her equality is established.

- “Besides, at the same time the true dignity of womankind is guaranteed: woman is not of inferior substance. The truest of kinship with man is also established: she is of his bone and flesh. Even the very part of the body from which she is taken is of deepest moment: woman is neither of the foot nor of the head, for she is neither superior nor inferior to man; she is exactly on the same level with him as far as being a creature of God is concerned.” (Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, Volume One, 135)

# This God-established equality will not permit the man to...

- 1) treat her ministry as implying inferiority, since she is an equal.
- 2) treat her as if lording over her which is inexcusable since her status is from God.
- 3) treat her in any way that diminishes the dignity of her position.

## Genesis 2:23 and the word “Woman”

- He is ADAM, she is ISHSHA.
- Luther: “But he says that Eve must be called...as though for ‘wife’ you would say ‘she-man’ from man, a heroic woman who performs mighty acts...she shares in all the cares, endeavors, duties, and functions of her husband.” (*Luther’s Works*, Vol. 1, 137)
- This is a classification of HONOR!



# Genesis 2:24

- Verse 24: ***“Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”***
- Hold Fast/Cleave/Cling = all point to “become one flesh”

The practical expression of this is striving to share interests and pursuits. This mentality is consummated in intercourse. These aspects more than anything are expressions of commitment to share every aspect of life. When we are faithful to God, we view this as our God-given duty, even the intimacy piece.