Grace to You :: *esp Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The First Family
Scripture: Genesis 2:18–24; Matthew 19:5
Code: B100816

No sane Christian questions the origin of the family. The Bible lays it out before us in unambiguous terms. *God* created the family—period. But *why*? God answered that question in the Old Testament long before any New Testament writers took up their pen. To get the divine perspective on the family, we have to go back, *way* back, to the very beginning.

The opening chapters of Genesis provide unparalleled clarity about origins. That's what the name Genesis means, *beginnings*, or *origins*. In Genesis we discover the beginning of the universe: time, space, and matter; the beginning of human history: mankind, sin, and redemption; and the beginning of culture: customs, languages, and nations. At the center and heart of human history, the formation of the family may be the most important account in the entire book of Genesis. Take a look at the first family.

According to the Bible, God Himself ordained the family as the basic building block of human society, because He deemed it "not good that man should be alone" (Gen. 2:18). That verse stands out starkly in the biblical Creation narrative, because as Scripture describes the successive days of the Creation week, the text punctuates each stage of Creation with the words "God saw that *it was good*" (Gen. 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25 italics added). The Goodness of Creation emerges as the main theme of Genesis 1, and the statement "God saw that it was good" is repeated again and again, like the refrain after each stanza of a lengthy song. Then finally, after the sixth day of Creation, we're told with emphasis, "God saw *everything* that He had made, and *indeed* it was *very* good" (Genesis 1:31, italics added).

But then Genesis 2:18 takes us back to the end of day six and reveals that just before God ended his creative work, just one thing was left that was "*not* good." Every aspect of the entire universe was finished. Each galaxy, star, planet, rock, grain of sand, and tiny molecule was in place. God had created all the species of living things. Adam had already given "names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field" (Genesis 2:20). But one glaring, unfinished aspect of Creation remained: "For Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him" (Genesis 2:20).

Adam was alone and incomplete. He needed a helper, a complement, a *wife* to share in the task of filling and taking dominion over the earth.

But before God introduced Adam to his bride, He prepared Adam to appreciate her. God paraded all the animals before Adam so he could personally inspect and name each one (Genesis 2:19, 20). Adam had to be impressed with God's provision for the animal kingdom—each animal with a suitable mate. At the same time, his curiosity had to have been aroused—"Where is my helper?"

God intended man to *rule* over the animal kingdom, not find fellowship in it. Adam discovered the radical distinction God made between himself and all animals. Remember, God made man with the capacity to enjoy a meaningful relationship. That unique characteristic is not found in any other

creature in the physical world. Man *alone* enjoys the unique privilege of sharing relationships with others. Since no animal was equipped to meet his need for fellowship—Adam needed an image-bearing human to meet that need—another act of Creation was required.

Therefore God's final act of creation on day six—the crowning step that made everything in the universe *perfect*—He accomplished by forming Eve from Adam's rib. Then "He brought her to the man" (Genesis 2:22).

Seeing Eve for the very first time must have been an exhilarating experience for Adam—imagine the smile on his face when God introduced them. Adam exclaimed, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." (Genesis 2:23). Adam had found a life-partner with whom he could enjoy fellowship and share responsibilities.

God commanded them to "be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth" (Genesis 1:28). A single man couldn't accomplish such monumental tasks, especially the task of multiplying and filling the earth, unless he had a companion.

In bringing Adam and Eve together, God established the family for all time. That first union became the pattern and purpose for every marriage to follow. They were indeed the *first* family. The Genesis narrative says, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). Jesus quoted that verse in Matthew 19:5 to underscore the sanctity and permanence of marriage as an institution. A pastor quotes that same verse practically every time he unites two believers in a Christian marriage ceremony. It is a reminder that God ordained marriage and the family—they were *His* idea—and therefore they are sacred in His sight. Marriage and the family should be sacred in our sight, too.

So, it is no mere accident of history that family relationships have always been the very nucleus of all human civilization. According to Scripture, that is precisely the way God designed it to be. The truth is quite the opposite of the liberal opinion—it doesn't take a village. It takes one man, one woman, and the Spirit of God who unites them together.

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