

The Goal of Marriage

It's not a bad commentary on **Genesis 2:18-25**. God, who after creating all that exists and pronouncing upon it His approval and satisfaction (**Genesis 1:31**), looked upon man's "aloneness," and pronounced His thorough dissatisfaction. He said, "It is not good that man should be alone" (**Genesis 2:18**). Man, by himself, was utterly lacking in what makes up everything understood as "good" for him in this life. I don't mean to offend bachelors, but your "beef" is with God. Bachelorhood is incomplete and ultimately not suited for man's best interest in this world. Fundamentally, marriage is God's answer to what my wife termed "surviving" in this present life.

The operation which God performed on Adam, taking his "side" and creating from Adam's side "like opposite him," or "matching him;" the Woman was instantly acknowledged by Adam as being the one perfectly suited to his needs (by implication, in the opposite direction as well). No animal matched Adam, but only accentuated his aloneness in the world (**Genesis 2:19-20**).

God's "*success is rapturously acclaimed in the poetic outburst in v.23*" (Gordon J. Wenham, Genesis 1-15, Volume one, Word Biblical Commentary, 68). This is not a surgical procedure but an act of God which "*brilliantly depicts the relation of man and wife*" (Wenham, 69). Matthew Henry's famous comment is apropos: "*Not made out of his head to top him, not out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved.*" There is not a man worth anything in this life who has not looked upon his wife with the loving realization that she has made him better in this world. A true man truly fears what he would have become without her.

The purpose is further understood by the severing of the relationship with one's parents (**Genesis 2:24**). The principle of the first marriage extends to all marriages: there was no other home but Adam's and Eve's. All parents who would be wise need to drink deeply at this well; as, too, all children who would be married. The Hebrew word is "forsake." Upon marriage, a man's priorities must radically alter. Where his concern before was toward his parents (particularly in a patriarchal society); it is now toward his wife. Our "helper suitable" is not found in a man's parents, but in his wife. So God has made it; so God has ordained it. Man's good is not ultimately to be found in his parents, but in the mate God provides for life on this earth. Remember whom to "leave" and to whom "to stick;" for only then will good ensue. Israel as a covenant nation was to "stick" to the LORD (cf. **Deut. 10:20; 11:22; 13:5**). So, too, a man is to "stick to his wife;" for only by so doing will he "survive" this life. It speaks not only of permanence, but of passion as well. What would "sticking" to the LORD mean if it did not involve both passion and permanence? We are to be passionately, permanently devoted to our mate.

The goal of marriage is also seen in becoming "one flesh" (**Genesis 2:24**). To be sure this phrase refers to the sexual relationship of marriage and ultimately the children that proceed from this union. "Godly offspring" is the desire of God for Israel, whose building blocks are each of the

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nation's marriages (**Malachi 2:15**). But "one flesh" is more than this. Adam said of Eve, "She is bone of my bones; flesh of my flesh." Indeed, she literally was. Eve was Adam's nearest kin (Laban to his nephew Jacob, **Genesis 29:14**). This is not to be understood incestuously, but of "relationship, of kind." Man and woman stood on equal footing regarding their "humanness." No animal stood with them on the same level. In fact, no other human being stood with them in the same manner. One man has rightly said, "Our children are but pieces of ourselves; our wife is our self." The intimacy of communion; the precious bond of equal-to-equal is the goal of marriage. We do not flourish in this world by ourselves. We flourish only with one, who in spite of knowing our terrible weaknesses, forgives and forgets; who lovingly serves and abides with us in sickness and in health, in good times and in adversity. So God made it; so God ordained it.

Chuck Durham