

Genesis 2:19-25 – God’s Design For Marriage

- 1) **Vs. 20** “a helper suitable” is actually two Hebrew words that could be translated literally, “one who complements; one who fills up the empty spaces of man” or “one who fits.” Its best and most literal translation is, “one answering back to.” “Answering back to” is synonymous in meaning as “one who complements” in this case by being complementarily opposites in roles and function.
- 2) **Genesis 1:26-28:** In these verses men and women are equal in that they are: ✓Created in God’s image (vs. 26) ✓ Both equally display the glory of God’s image (vs. 27) ✓Both are to rule over creation (vv. 26, 28) ✓Equality is also described in verses 18 and 20 of Genesis chapter 1, of all the creatures God created only woman was found “comparable for Adam”. She alone then was Adam’s equal.
- 3) There would seem to be a paradox since the Bible proclaims man and woman equal yet man is given headship. God did not make Adam and Eve from the ground at the same time for a distinction in the same way God did not make woman first as this would have obscured the nature of male headship and female submission.
- 4) The apostle Paul uses this concept of man being created first as headship. **1 Corinthians 11:8** “*For man was not created from woman but woman from man.*” In the next verse Paul then gives further details about on the purpose of man’s headship (vs.9), “*Nor was man created for the woman, but the woman for the man.*” Combining Paul’s teachings in **1 Corinthians 11:8-9** with **Genesis 1:26-28** where the woman is described as “suitable helper” and God names man as head, with counsel and help of the woman, they will fulfill God’s purposes for marriage and ultimately for mankind through the home.
- 5) The Biblical definition of male headship: In the partnership of two spiritually equal human beings, man and woman, the man bears the primary responsibility to lead the partnership in a God-glorifying direction. This definition implies that man is to love his wife by accepting the primary responsibility for making their marriage partnership a display of God’s glory, and the woman is to love her husband by supporting him in that godly undertaking.
- 6) **Ephesians 5:25-27** identifies the male headship as a loving servant leader in the same manner as Christ is the head of the church, and loves the church and gave Himself for it. For a husband to love his wife the way Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her requires a man to be humble, self-denying, up-building wife and family; to protect, provide, and uplift his wife. Christ-like servant leadership means constantly growing spiritually in grace to enable him to respond to the Holy Spirit’s leadership, cultivating love and tenderness in Christ-like fashion (i.e. as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her.) Male headship means the husband employs biblical guidelines for what is appropriate behavior for a husband. Equally, a husband should also employ biblical guidelines personally to avoid inappropriate behaviors, such as domination or passivity, and should see servant leadership in terms of responsibility and not as “rights.”
- 7) In the Scriptures when Christian privileges are taught they are always accompanied by corresponding obligations. In **1 Peter 3:7** the apostle describes the husband’s obligations to his wife as understanding as they manage their headship. This necessitates that the husband be considerate and sensitive to the feelings of his wife. In our politically correct society today, chivalry is considered especially negative. However, in Scriptures it is translated as “graciousness, courtesy, gallantry, and politeness.”
- 8) Furthering the theme of God’s intention for marriage can be revealed in female submission. Female / wife submission can be defined as: Submission is an inner quality of gentleness that affirms the leadership of the husband.
- 9) This type of submission refers to a wife’s divine calling to honor and affirm her husband’s leadership and assist in carry it through in accordance with her God-given spiritual gifts.
- 10) This does not mean absolute surrender of her will, but an inclination or disposition to yield to her husband’s guidance and to follow his godly leadership. Christ ultimately is her absolute authority. The wife submits to her husband “out of reverence for Christ.” **Ephesians 5:21**

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11) What submission is not:

- Submission does not mean following her husband into sin as warned in **1 Peter 3:1** where the apostle provides instructions for wives married to unbelievers to be submissive “*as long as this does not involve sin*”
- Submission does not mean the wife must give up independent thought; neither does it mean she should give up efforts to influence her husband in godly ways and decisions
- Submission does not mean a wife must give into any ungodly or unbiblical demands from her husband

12) Submission is not inconsistent with equality in Christ with her husband. A wife’s submission to her husband should never be taken as spiritual inferiority. In **1 Peter 3:7** Peter affirms the husbands and wives are “*...heirs together of the grace of life ...*” Paul commends in **Galatians 3:28-29** “*... there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*”

13) Lastly, understanding of the nature of submission is obtained from **1 Peter 3:4** from Peter’s description of the beauty of submission as “*a gentle and quite spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.*” This type of beauty comes from a wife’s inward spiritual nature that is outwardly noticeable, influencing her husband and others who observe it. This gentle spirit comes from one who has faith and trust in God to supply their needs and can live life confidently.

14) Summary of the biblical responsibilities of male and females: For the husband, God’s call to leadership does not mean unilateral power, but rather to “love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it.” (**Ephesians 3:25**) This necessitates the husband first and foremost loves his wife as Christ loved the church. Additionally it calls for him to modestly, non-selfishly lead, protect, and provide spiritually, emotionally, and the physical needs of the wife and family. For the wife it is the beauty of “a gentle and quite spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God” (**1 Peter 3:4**) affirming her husband’s leadership in the home.

15) The male headship and female submission in a good biblical marriage results in spouses centering their attention on showing honor to one another. (**Romans 12:10**) The husband and wife accomplish this in the way Paul commanded the believers at Galatia to not use their Christian liberties as opportunities for the flesh, rather “*through love be servants to one another.*” (**Galatians 5:13**)

16) In conclusion, in God’s purpose for marriage He specifically designed men and women differently, assigning each shared and individual differing roles and responsibilities as a means of complementing and completing one another. These collective functions given to husbands and wives are designed to bring fulfillment, satisfaction, joy, honor to husbands and wives, their children, and honor to the marriage as an institution. In a home when a husband leads like Christ and a wife responds like the bride of Christ, there is a harmony and mutuality that is balanced and more beautiful and satisfying than any pattern of marriage created by mankind.

17) Three ways to develop marital companionship:

1. Confidence – Proverbs 17:9, “*He who conceals a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates intimate friends.*” **2. Communicating Through Confrontation** – Proverbs 25:5-6, “*Better is open rebuke than love that is concealed. Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.*” Proverbs 27:17, “*Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another*” **3. Communication through counsel** – Proverbs 27:9, “*Oil and perfume make the heart glad, so a man’s counsel is sweet to his friend.*”

18) Building Trust:

- > Demonstrate you are working, interested, and concerned for the other’s best interest as well as your own – do this in ways that show respect for the other person
- > Practice openness – honest, transparent, candidness / directness, speaking your thoughts and feelings
- > Admit when you don’t understand (don’t assume) – seek clarity and understanding
- > Show consistency in the basic values that guide your decisions
- > Dialogue and after viewing alternatives make decisions using the consensus method that are the best choices based on the available information