

Why God instituted Marriage: to cultivate and care for Creation

Genesis 2:4 ... the Lord God made the earth and the heavens. 5 When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up for the Lord God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, 6 and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground 7 then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. 8 And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. 15 The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. [BUT] V.18 The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone [to do this work]. God had said everything [He had made] was good (1:31). This is the first "not good" in the Bible cf 1 Cor 11:8f; 1 Tim 2:13 Man being by himself is not good.

God created a helper to do the work and to produce more workers.

The meaning of "good" must be defined contextually. Within the context of the Cultural Mandate, God instructs mankind to be fruitful and multiply (1:28), the man alone cannot do the work. Being alone prevents the man from fulfilling the design of creation. Therefore, this is not good. God says, "I will make a helper suitable for him."

The Hebrew word [*ezer*] translated as "helper" does not suggest a subordinate role, a connotation which English "helper" can have. In the Bible, God is frequently described as the "helper," meaning, the one who does for us what we cannot do for ourselves, the one who meets our needs. God is not subordinate to "Man"! This is why the translation "helper" by itself is misleading to the English reader. "Man" has his assignment from God to do something for Him (care for Creation). He can not do this alone. He needs help doing it. God will help Adam, as in Psalm 121:1-2, but He will do this through another human being who will be a Woman.

The KJV translates *ezer* as "helpmete" ("helpmate" in colloquial English) reflecting that the Hebrew adds an additional word to *ezer* which is *kynegdo*, translated as "suitable" in the ESV. It literally means "the opposite" [as a reflection in a mirror] or "corresponding to" him. God had actually said of the man, "I will make someone who corresponds to him in every way to be his helper in the work of caring for and cultivating the "Garden". The man's form and nature are matched by the woman's. She reflects him and complements him. They correspond to each other. They are equals- everything man has, as a human being, woman has. This is not true of any other animal -v.20

v. 19 now the Lord God had formed [shaped] out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man but for Adam no suitable helper was found. 21 so the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took

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one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. 22 then the Lord God made a woman [ishshaw] from the rib he had taken out of the man [ish], and he brought her to the man. A "wo-man" which in old English was wim from wife plus man, ie- a "woman" is a man's wife or at least a female, the human counterpart to a male

Why didn't God make another man [i.e.- a male]? Many commentators see man's need is for a companion [male or female], period. They interpret this text as God saying it is not good for a person to live apart from community. Community is good-

Eccles 4:9☐ two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: 10 if one falls down, his friend can help him up, but pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! 11 also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? 12 though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves.

While this is true, more than companionship is meant. God created a female as His answer to Adam's need to fulfill the cultural mandate to reproduce, as well as work. A man needs a woman [and vice versa] to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. Adam himself recognizes how fitting, suitable to him, the female is: v. 23 the man said, "*this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man.*"

She and he are bone of bone & flesh of flesh---totally in harmony, cut from the same cloth and naturally intended to have intercourse (become "one flesh") and propagate. This obviously was not possible in same-sex companionship or the companionship of a man and his dog (or any other animal).

Men and women, husbands and wives, are equals as human beings; but, is woman subordinate to man in their roles? Yes. The male was created first and he names the female (twice), even as he named all the animals. Naming is a sign and privilege of authority. See- *1 Corinthians 11:8 Man did not come from woman, but woman from man; 9 neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.*

The creation of man and woman is followed by the institution of Marriage between the man and the woman.

2: 22 And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. 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. 24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

- *a man will leave his father and mother-*

- *and be united to his wife, [an exclusive, permanent commitment- the Wedding is not just a legal formality.☐ It includes vows of betrothal: "troth" is old English for Truth.☐ Truth, as in the Bible, means faithfulness.☐ In a Wedding, a man and a woman take vows to be faithful to each other "till death do us part"- they make a Covenant]*

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- *and [they do this in order to] become one flesh.*

v. 25 the man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame. They had trust, harmony, peace- no guilt, no secrets.

Jesus said, Mark 10:6- from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' 7 'therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, 8 and they shall become one flesh.' so they are no longer two but one flesh. 9 what therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."

1. Marriage is a Creation Ordinance- instituted by God at Creation

2. Marriage has three God-given "Norms", in sequence: leave + cleave + achieve

3. Marriage has a God-given purpose: fulfill the Cultural Mandate

This is Marriage as God intended. We do not defend this concept of marriage on the basis of Tradition or what is good for society. The concept depends on the Authority of the Word of God. It is what God wants and what suits His purposes for the Creation

Marriage and Procreation

The primary purpose for the creation of males and females was procreation of the species. This purpose is demonstrated in planning for life after the flood-

GENESIS 6:13 God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. ... 17 I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. 18 But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark-you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you. 19 You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you. 20 Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive" 7:1 The LORD then said to Noah, "Go into the ark, you and your whole family... 2 Take with you a male and its mate, and two of every kind of unclean animal, a male and its mate, 3 and also seven of every kind of bird, male and female, to keep their various kinds alive throughout the earth seven of every kind of clean animal,

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The union of a male and a woman for procreation is essential to what Marriage is. ^{1, 2, 3.} If this intent had been ignored, the human race would have been lost. All living creatures would have perished. "Marriage" is not a matter of culture. It is not to be defined by courts or legislatures. Courts and legislatures are to uphold and defend what God, the Creator, has intended.

Note 1- There is a God-given Gift of Celibacy. God occasionally calls some men and some women to serve Him as life-long single persons. Others, particularly young adults, widows and widowers, are called to serve God for a part of their lives as singles. (See Matthew 19 and 1 Corinthians 7)

Note 2 There are some couples who have fulfilled marriages even though they are unable, for physical or health reasons, to have intercourse. This, too, is exceptional and requires a gift of grace.

Note 3- Children are a Gift from the Lord. It is possible that God has plans other than parenthood for some specific couples. Actually, many people who become parents, have meaningful marriages without children for many years, i.e. - before their children are born and after they move away.

People gifted with Celibacy or with Marriage without children have a life journey just as valid and meaningful as those of people married with children.

However, the Norm for all is Marriage and Parenthood as part of fulfilling the Cultural Mandate. Exceptions are for God to determine as He deems best and for individuals to accept as His good will for them. It is neither God's will for individuals to intentionally remain unmarried nor His will for couples to intentionally not have children.