

## For Better or Worse

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Week 2, May 28, 2023

*<sup>23</sup> For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. (Ephesians 5-NIV)*

Because covenant marriage is **designed** by God, it is also **defined** by God. A covenant is like an umbrella, it does not stop it from raining, it stops it from raining on you! In Malachi 2:14, God says, *“she is your wife by covenant.”* She is your wife by covenant. The word covenant is a divinely initiated commitment between God and His people.

At the heart is the idea **“to cover.”**

The reason you need to understand covenant, is because God operates according to the agreements he makes through a covenant. Covenants are powerful. Covenants are personal. Covenants are permanent.

Covenants provide a covering. This allows God to step into any situation that requires, (healing, deliverance, financial, marital), intervention and fulfill the covenant agreement. To activate the covenant benefits.

*He is the one who forgives all of your sins, who heals all of your diseases. (Ps 103:3-NET)* Psalm 103:3, tells us that as followers of Christ, our covenant benefits include forgiveness of sins and healing of our sicknesses.

Covenants are kingdom mechanisms by which God will faithfully operate in your life. If you have accepted Jesus Christ, you are a part of the New Covenant, because of Jesus sacrificial life, death, resurrection, rapture, and return, **you are in the covenant.**

God tells us that she is your **wife by covenant.** So, you only need to understand 1 word. Marriage is covenant.

*<sup>14</sup> Make for yourself an ark of cypress wood. Make rooms in the ark and **cover it** (this is the same word for redemption in the NT, kaphar), with pitch inside and out.*

*<sup>17</sup> I am about to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy from under the sky all the living creatures that have the breath of life in them. Everything that is on the earth will die, <sup>18</sup> but I will confirm my covenant with you. You will enter the ark—you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. (Genesis 6-NET)*

Like Malachi 2:14, there is a parallel covenant relationship in the New Testament, which applies to marriage.

And it is in that marriage covenant you find safety.

In the marriage covenant you find shelter.

In the marriage covenant you find a spouse.

*<sup>23</sup> For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. (Ephesians 5-NIV)*

Because covenant marriage is designed by God, it is also defined by God.

Like a broken-down car, unless you acquire the right skills for marriage, your marriage will leave you stranded on the side of the road.

Marriage is not one long tunnel of love that never ends. Married couples know something about this. They finish each other's sentences. Anticipate each other's actions.

They even begin to start looking like each other. And it is deeply troubling to think that you are starting to look like each other. **Brother and sister.**

And then along with looking like each other, you finish each other's sentences. Danice and I have been married for 34 years. We no longer converse: **We communicate in code.**

She walks into the kitchen and announces, "close the refrigerator."  
Danice, before I even ask says, "no I don't want one." It is on the second shelf. The kids ate all of them.

She sees me rummaging around in the closet looking for something and I begin to yell, hey babe, she says, "it's on the 3<sup>rd</sup> shelf.

She knows what I will say before I say it. Because of that she can **speak on my behalf** with **utmost authority**.

He won't like those **shoes**. He will never wear that **shirt**. He wants it in **black**. She knows what she is talking about. She is the qualified covenant legal guardian because she knows me like no one else.

At some point you move beyond love and affection and start to think about life together in terms of practice and economics.

You move beyond loving, to listening and learning.

You move beyond worshipping the ground she walks on, to working (overtime), to pay some bills she has created. Oops! You both created. Ok, that is better.

You move beyond dreamy eyed and handholding, to dreary eyed and diaper changing.

You move beyond talking for hours, to talking for minutes.

You move beyond holding the door, (is your arm broken?) to come let's hurry.

You move beyond, buying flowers, (save them for the funeral), we have to pay some bills.

You move beyond, telling her you love her, (as one man said, "I told her when we got married, if it changes, I will let her know), to telling her you lost your iPhone. And could she help you find it!

You buy a house. You raise kids. Your parents die. And you hit midlife.

At some point you move beyond love and affection and live with bills, babies, and bad neighbors. Do you know what I am talking about? Am I right? We don't get to have it any other way.

A guy was at a cemetery, pounding on the head stone; banging on the tombstone saying, "Why did you have to die? Why did you have to die? Why did you have to die?"

A man nearby putting some flowers on a family grave site overhead the man crying, shouting, and asking the question, "Why did you have to die?"

He decided to offer some comfort, "Oh, I am sorry you lost your wife."

"No", he said, "This is my wife's first husband". "Why did you have to die?"

If you understand, apply, and implement the word covenant, you can have an altogether different marriage. You can desire to be married like never before. You can enjoy your marriage and wake up every day thanking God for putting that woman, that man in your life.

When you base your marriage on covenant, **you can** learn more about God, **you can** love God more, and **you can** receive God's blessings and favor as you implement your covenant marriage benefits.

So, let me show you two covenant marriage responsibilities. The benefits await you! If you buy into this... You will stop saying, "I am married", and start saying, "I am **convenantally** married. I possess a covenantal marriage."

God can transform any marriage, no matter how clueless you are about improving and fixing the marriage. In this series, for many of you we are towing your marriage into the marital garage and replacing the engine, putting on new brakes and changing the oil. Every marriage needs at least a tune up from time to time. Anybody agree?

Like a car or truck, you care about, every covenantal marriage needs proper maintenance to maintain its God-designed purpose.

So, every marital covenant has some ingredients, it has some conditions. I want to show you two of the conditions. **First**, God designed marriage covenants, to mirror his image. **Next**, God designed marriage covenants to bless you with a spouse.

When these 2 ingredients and 2 conditions are operating under the word covenant, there is covering and there is empowerment because you are in the covenant with God.

God designed marriage covenants to mirror His image.

*<sup>26</sup> Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. <sup>27</sup> So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. (Gen 1-ESV)*

Marriage covenants are God authored and God ordained. They come from another reality. Marriage is God's idea. It is not a human established institution.

Marriage is designed for humans; it was not created by humans.

Because covenant marriage is designed by God, it is also defined by God.

This is why God says in Matthew 19:6, *"so they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate."* (Matt 19:6)

Have you heard that declaration at a wedding? **You don't go to the church for marriage and then go to the court for divorce.** If God does not give you biblical grounds for divorce and he was present and blessing your marriage, then you cannot go to man to dissolve what God has designed. What God has united. What God has joined.

Who does God want us to mirror in marriage?

We are going to make man and woman in our image. An image is a mirror. We want them to mirror us. Question: Who is the us, in verse 26, of Gen 1?

The answer is the Trinity. The Godhead since he uses the plural. The trinity is made up of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

One God composed of 3 tri-equal, 3 distinguishing personages, 3 distinctive powers, 3 divine personalities, all existing in harmony and purpose.

The Father is not the Son.

The Son is not the Holy Spirit.

And the Holy Spirit is not the Father.

It is like a pretzel with 3 holes. The first hole is not the second hole. The second hole is not the 3<sup>rd</sup> hole. And the 3<sup>rd</sup> hole is not the first hole. But they are all tied together by the same dough. (Tony Evans)

Let me say it this way. And this is important because your marriage and family is a reflection and mirror of the trinity. All are uniquely distinguished persons of the trinity, and all possess a divine nature.

But how did God manifest himself on earth? (1) He formed Adam from the dust of the ground. (2) He fashioned Eve from the rib of man. (3) Adam and Eve conceived the children, and Eve gave birth. God wants to Trinitize family.

Formed.      Fashioned.      Conceived.      Birth.

Adam is not Eve. Eve is not the children. The children are not Adam. But they are all held together by a God designed marriage and family.

Adam, Eve and kids are a mirror of reflection, replication and ruling.

God wants to Trinitize family. So, God designs a marriage and family to mirror him. As reflection.

Then there is replication. Be fruitful and multiplying. What are we multiplying? Not merely multiplying look-a-likes.

God is not merely multiplying kids that, look like us, we are multiplying his image. So, the idea is that there would be generational manifestation of God purposes in the earth as families spread out.

If you have 4 children, one goes to the east coast, west coast, north and south, the image of God, the replication of God, God's gospel, God's message has traveled with them around the earth in the parenting process. God gives you children to take over the world, with Christ honoring children.

So, there is reflection. There is replication. There is rulership. Ruling. Adam, Eve and kids are a mirror of reflection, replication and ruling.

Let them rule. The word is dominion. Let them operate on my behalf in history. God created man in the physical, so that the spiritual could become visible in time and space. God created man so God could reflect himself.

What God does in the spiritual realm; he can now make known in the visible realm. God created marriage in the physical, so the marriage could mirror God in the invisible.

Because covenant marriage is designed by God, it is also defined by God. So, the reason you cannot have gay marriage, trans marriage or any other marriage, live in, sleep in, or anything else, **it is not God defined.**

Because covenant marriage is designed by God, it is also defined by God. And if you are going to a place called heaven; you have to go to it God's way!

The second aspect of the marriage covenant is marriage blesses us with a spouse of the opposite sex. Who would have ever expected that I would have to make that kind of clarification? If you are a male, you marry a female. If you are a female, you marry a male.

Let that sink in, that I even have to make that blindingly clear today. But I do! I will. I have!

God designed marriage covenants to bless us with a spouse.

*<sup>18</sup> Then the Lord God said, "It's not good that the human is alone. I will make him a helper that is perfect for him." <sup>21</sup> So the Lord God put the human into a deep and heavy sleep, and took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh over it.<sup>22</sup> With the rib taken from the human, the Lord God fashioned a woman and brought her to the human being. (Gen 2-CEB)*

In this verse we see that God creates a chain of command; a hierarchy as seen in Eph 5. <sup>23</sup> *For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. (Ephesians 5-NIV)*

God created Adam before Eve because God would hold the man responsible. When God created Adam there was no women. In God's purposes

for family, there would never be a single person. Singleness exists because of the fall. Without the fall, there would be no death, no widows, no widowers, without the fall and sin there would be no divorce.

God designed a family by a chain of command. God created Adam before Eve because he would hold the man responsible.

As a part of being responsible, before Eve arrives on the scene, Adam is a farmer and rancher. Names some animals. And tends to some trees.

Let's peek in on Adam's horticulture skills. God says, <sup>15</sup> *The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.*

<sup>16</sup> *And the Lord God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; <sup>17</sup> but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die."* (Gen 2-NIV)

God told Adam; you have unlimited choice of my finest fruits. My finest orchard crops. Of my finest creations next to you.

Eat from everything except the Google Tree.

That is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That is the information center. The google tree. So, I want to tell the man, there is no women yet, you are to live by revelation, not reason.

Not to live by reason but, live by revelation. I do not want you to make your decisions on human reason that will conflict with my revelation. Choose my word, my bible over your human ideology, human philosophies.

Adam was to live by revelation, not human reason.

And when you live by divine revelation, over human reason you will live in freedom. Blessing. Covenant.

After naming the animals God is going to fashion a woman.



*But for Adam<sup>[f]</sup> no **suitable helper** was found. <sup>21</sup> So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs<sup>[g]</sup> and then closed up the place with flesh. (Gen 2)*

God cloned from Adam a solitary human being who rescued Adam from his aloneness and who brings out the emerging image of God to its rightful completion **in community. That is the key-community. Family. Team.**

To **rescue** is the real meaning of a “suitable helper,” in Gen 2:20. But, to rescue from what? Overwork? Exhaustion? From aloneness.

Now, look at all of the English attempts to rescue Adam in Gen 2:20,

a suitable helper for him, (NIV)

a helper who is just right for him, (NLT)

a helper fit for him, (ESV)

a help meet for him, (KJV)

a helper comparable to him, (NKJV)

a helper [one who balances him—a counterpart who is] suitable *and* complementary for him, (Amp)

a helper for him like himself. (Aramaic Plain English)

*...but for Adam no companion who corresponded to him was found. Gen 2:20-(NET)*

Do you see a common word in the Hebrew. Helper. Men, everyday your wife is rescuing you, helping you from some disaster. From some mistake. Helping you. Men, that are married, we need help!

As the Beatles sing, “Help, I need somebody, help not just anybody.”

According to the text, the word **ezer**, the helper was provided so that man would not be alone. Man was not in the image of God because he was a singularity. A sole human. A soul, but without a soul mate.

The woman is created to “help” man out of his aloneness, not out of his overworked status. The bible never presents the idea that Adam is overburdened by excess work.

As if God has given Adam too much work in naming the animals and subduing the earth. The bible never even suggests Adam needs an assistant to help him to get things done.

He certainly, wasn't overworked tending the zoo and managing the garden, and so maybe God needed to take pity on him and give him someone to lighten the load. Or better yet, someone Adam could boss around.

Eve is not the, “clothes folder” or, “family controller”. Eve is not, “dinner baker”. Eve is not, “coffee maker”. She is not, “grocery shopper” or, “celery chopper”.

No. Never. The only reason God created Eve as a counterpart was so that Adam would not be alone. Eve was not to be a convenience for man's benefit or to make his solitary life easier for him.

God gave Adam a helper to solve the aloneness issue. The problem was solved when Adam and Eve became one flesh. And when they became one flesh the highest level of the image of God was experienced.

*...and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. (Gen 2)*

The Hebrew word for *rib*, is *side*.

So, God fashions a woman from a rib. Or technically from his side. When God made Adam, he threw dirt together. God uses a different Hebrew word when he made Eve. *When God made Adam, he threw dirt together, when he made Eve, he fashioned her. (Gen 2:22)*

He fashioned her. When a man says, “she sure is built, the man is being very biblical at that point.” Now, God plays cupid, and he brings her to him. And Adam names her, that why a woman takes a man's name.

Adam names her. His name is ISH. She is ISHA. The feminine form of ISH. Then God performs the marriage vows. *God performs the covenantal marriage vows.* (Gen 2:23-25)

*<sup>23</sup> 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." <sup>24</sup> That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh. <sup>25</sup> Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.* (Gen 2-NIV)

Because covenant marriage is designed by God, it is also defined by God. Let me suggest you make a couple covenants today for your current marriage, or future marriage.

A marriage covenant of permanence. A marriage covenant of priority.

#### Marriage Covenant for Permanence and Priority.

Father, today I declare my current marriage or future marriage as a covenant marriage. You alone designed marriage and you define marriage. Marriage is between a man and women.

My love for my spouse is based on Christ's love for the church. I desire my marriage to mirror the image of God. So, today I choose permanence and priority as foundational covenant ingredients as long as we shall live. For better or for worse. For richer or for poorer.

Together we choose to live by revelation and not human reason. God created our marriage in the physical, so that marriage could mirror God in the invisible. So, bless. Favor. And protect this marriage for your glory. In Jesus' Name. Amen.