

The Blessedness of Letting God be God

Our Identity in Christ

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The title of the message this morning is "The Blessedness of Letting God be God." The blessedness of letting God be God, the happiness, the joy of letting God be God, to be blessed is to be made happy by the Lord, to have his joy as your joy. And I choose that title because our text, 1 Peter 3:1-7, a description of the relationships of husbands and wives in marriage and a description of the roles, distinct roles that God gives to men and women, you step back from it for a moment and we look at the forest and don't miss the forest for the trees, one of the things that struck me is you just look at the passage, you read the passage, we worked through it the last couple of Sundays, the first six verses, Lord willing we'll go into verse 7 next time, but just stepping back from it and just pondering the way that these words sound on modern ears. Our contemporaries, culture, friends, acquaintances, as we think about, you know, how different the Christian worldview is, how odd it looks, I mean, how odd is it for men and women to relate like this? I mean, we're going to read in a moment the text again, Sarah called Abraham lord, and again, I'm not advocating for the practical outworking of that particular point in the passage, but it says something profound about the relationships of men and women. And it's very different in thinking about this issue, you know, the passage and the context, remember, of 1 Peter is, he's trying to help them live in a culture that is opposed to them, that is at odds with them. He is aware that they are being slandered as evildoers. Key verse in the letter is 1 Peter 2:12, they slander you as evildoers, but live in such a way that though they slander you as evildoers, their observing of your good deeds will glorify God on the day of visitation. That is, they slander you as evildoers, but they're going to come to see the beauty of what your life is, but at first glance, they look at it and they say, "That's evil." I mean, if I were to preach a passage, like had an opportunity to preach somehow to a bunch of unbelievers a message, I don't think I'd pick 1 Peter 3:1-7. Not the first message because there's so much ground, you can't get there from here, in a sense, right? And in a sense, there's a reality in which we can't get there from here with them anyway. Doesn't it seem so, as you relate to unbelievers, as you think about, as you read about them, as you talk to them, as you observe on the internet or on television the culture and the currents of thought and belief, ideals, ideas, and you feel like, how can we get through to them? They're so far removed from truth, such a vast distance. And when they look at us and they look at how we live, they see us as evildoers. Remember the word evil and the idea of evildoers, somebody doing harm. To do evil is to do harm. They see us as people who are harmful. We are mixed up in outdated and outmoded morality

that is oppressive. That's how they see it. The ideas that we have are weird and they're offensive and so when they look at us, they say, "You guys are messed up. You're hurting us. You're hurting the world. The world would be really better off if you guys would just get out." But what he says is, we're to live in the midst of that kind of cultural opposition, that kind of resistance, we're to still live the beautiful design that God has given and we're to live, and as we do good deeds, back in 1 Peter 2:12, remember, they observe your good deeds, the word is kallos, it means beautiful. They don't at first think they're beautiful, but God says they're beautiful, and you keep doing what God says to do, and the beauty will eventually shine through, and they will go from being slanderers who accuse you of evil doing, to be people who now glorify God. God's way is right. This is what he's describing. He's calling us to a life that is different, that is going to be seen as odd, as weird, as evil by unbelievers, but we know it's good. We know it's what God has called us to. We know God is good. And as we live this, they will see that. That's the dominant thought.

So now, let's apply that to the verses we're going to read here in a moment. So the male-female relationship, as God has designed it, the male-female relationship in marriage, as God has designed it, is supremely beautiful. God says it is. Even though for you and me, even as believers, if we're honest, at times it looks a little weird and some, it looks weirder than others, some of us have more trouble with it than others and its different teachings in Scripture. When you encounter them, and you see what God says, and you think of how you think, how you've been trained to think, how you've learned to reason from your experience, and the things that you know in life, and some Scripture that you've learned, and you still look at this truth, and you're like, "This just doesn't make sense. This is weird." And some of us find that in different areas, you'll find things that are more offensive, more difficult. But the Christian is the person who, as Proverbs 3:5 says, he's learned to trust in the Lord with all his heart and to lean not on his own understanding. The Christian is the one who is learning as Proverbs 14:12 says, there's a way that seems right to a man but the end thereof is the way of death. Seems right, but it leads to death. The Christian is the person who knows because God has given them a new heart, they now understand that their old heart that's still present with them, the old man's still there, can't be trusted. You can't trust your heart. You can't ultimately trust your conscience. Your conscience must be informed by Scripture. Your heart must be transformed by Scripture because Jeremiah 17:9 tells us the heart is deceitful above all things. Now think about that. That's a pretty high statement. The heart is deceitful above all things. There's a lot of deceitful things in the world, but nothing more deceitful than the human heart. "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it?"

So that's the background of what Scripture says about how we're to approach life and so, we know that when we come to Scripture, we should expect that we're going to come across things that we find don't make sense to us, that we come across things that do not appeal to us, we come across things in Scripture that we just don't want to do. That is normal Christian living. The question is, what do you do with that? Do you follow your heart or do you trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding? He goes on to say, acknowledge him in all your ways, he'll direct your

paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes, the next verse, Proverbs 3:7. Don't be wise in your own eyes. The Christian is the person who's learning that he's not to be wise in his own eyes. The fact that I feel this way, the fact that I think this way, I mean, I know I can't trust in it. I can only trust in the word. It doesn't mean that we don't learn. Over time, our conscience becomes a better guide. As you inform it with Scripture, your conscience becomes a better... and I'm not saying ignore your conscience completely. I'm just saying don't trust it implicitly. Trust the word of God always but your conscience, as you study the word of God, your conscience will come more and more in line. And praise God, the gift of the human conscience is a blessing. It does restrain, even in unbelievers, it restrains evil at some level. I'm just saying it's not a reliable guide for us, though. It's not ultimately reliable but the word of God is.

Now, so I say all that to say, listen, let's read this picture and try to look at it and think about it through the eyes of an unbeliever or a culture, how does this look to the modern American mind. 1 Peter 3:1 to 7.

1 In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, 2 as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. 3 Your adornment must not be merely external braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; 4 but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. 5 For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; 6 just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear. 7 You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.

That's the beauty of God's design.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Our Father, as we come to your word, we come with hearts that need to acknowledge our great need of grace. Help us to humble ourselves before your word. Help us to humble ourselves before our Savior. Holy Spirit, we ask that you might open the eyes of our hearts to understand to apply these things to us, to help us think your thoughts after you, to love what you love and to hate what you hate, and in doing so, to be blessed and filled with your joy. We thank you for these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

The blessedness of letting God be God, particularly as it relates to gender roles. The blessedness of letting God be God, particularly as it relates to gender roles. Now we're talking about the marriage relationship, that's what Peter's dealing with, but there are applications to just maleness and femaleness that can be drawn from this as we're talking

about this and the bigger application is that what we're talking about is our need to submit to God's design in every area of life anyway. So that's the big application, are we going to trust in the Lord and live by his word in every area of life. But I did want to point out that maleness and femaleness are being talked about in general principle form, even as the particular application is to the marriage relationship. And I want us to think about, I said, you look at this through man's eyes. We're talking about male and female relationships and roles. We're talking about something in the church you may have heard these terms, many of you have, and some of you may not be as familiar with them, this is a debate within the church. I'm talking now, not what's happening out in the world. I'm talking about inside the local church or inside the evangelical world, local churches, Bible-believing churches. There's a debate about something called complementarianism versus egalitarianism. Complementarianism versus egalitarianism. Now, I'm going to put this under a heading. Let's put this under a heading. First heading is the futility of human invention. Okay, this is the first point. We're going to talk about several things under it. The futility of human invention because what we see is man is constantly trying to order his world the way he wants to order it, and he wants to reinvent gender, for instance. Right? He's doing it. Mankind is trying to do that right now and so we want to look at, though, the futility of human invention. Man is very creative. Man has incredible ability. I mean, that's one of the messages you get as you read the Scripture. Because God made man in his own image, he made him like him in some way to rule. He gave man tremendous capacity, male and female, Genesis 1:26 and 27. And then in Genesis 11, an interesting thing. You remember when they build the Tower of Babel to make a name for themselves that reaches to the heavens, you remember what God says about it? He says, "Let Us go down now and tear down this tower and confuse their language because nothing will be impossible for them if We don't stop this." There's something powerful when man really seeks to build and glorify himself and magnifies his pride and vanity, the audacity of humanity coming together, there is real power in that. Now it's a destructive, it is a wicked, it is an evil power, but it's real and we see evidences of that kind of thing in the world. We see it in man's proud inventions. The futility of human invention. man invents his own way.

Now I was talking about, let's talk about for a moment, I'm going to reverse my order. 1. The point is the futility of human invention. Let's talk about gender issues for a moment. I mean, if you step back from it, again, you've got to remember, we get the proverbial frog in the kettle; we're surrounded by such deception continually, we get numb to it. But the fact that people are saying that it is evil and unkind to say that only women can have babies, it's just, it's hard to imagine. How did this happen to say that men cannot have children because that's true. It just is. Now, think about the audacity of mankind to now invent this idea that you can change your gender and doctors are convinced they're doing it. I mean, these are people who went to a lot of school. These are brilliant human brains. I don't say brilliant people, they're fools but they're very, very intelligent fools. They've gone to medical school and they've convinced themselves because they've been listening to other very intelligent fools, that you can maim a physical body, remove organs, and rebuild the opposite and they think they're doing it. I mean, you know, they start the hormone blockers to stop puberty, right, and then they have surgery, and of course, it's bad enough to do that to adults who make a decision as an adult, but they're doing it to

children and they call that gender affirming care. And they really believe it. I mean, to think about that. And so, now, that's one of the areas we see it.

Now, I started off with the most offensive one, but you come back to the gender roles here in 1 Peter 3 and now the issue of complementarianism and egalitarianism. Is it not the same thing, the same essential issue for us to not accept God's design for gender roles in marriage and in the church as it is, is it not the same essential sin to reject what God says about gender in marriage and the church as it is for someone to say, "I will not accept what God says about gender, He made them male and female and we changed their physical bodies." It's basically rebellion. It's human audacity, human pride, exalting itself up against the knowledge of God and it's what man naturally does, but the problem is it always ends in futility, in emptiness. Man then invents his own system, and it robs us of blessing. It robs us of joy. It robs us of living as God has created us to live. God made us. He wired us. He knows how he made us. He made us to live according to his book in every way and blessedness and joy is found in walking this way. It's not found in walking according to our own opinion, to the, you know, surveys and what people want. And you think about the futility of that human invention when it comes back to the issue of transgender and changing gender. They perform this procedure, they perform a surgery. Imagine a boy or a young man wants to become a woman. He believes he is. We understand that there's serious struggles going on in his heart. We should have compassion and love for the person. We should be people who are befriending people on this road and helping them and loving them and understanding them and then offering them the truth. But loving them. But a man, think about this, the promise, the futility of man's proud invention, man thinks he can change gender, and so he creates a surgical procedure to do that and so removes male genitalia. They then cut open the body and leave an open wound in this former man's body, still a man, They leave an open wound. Everything in the body wants to heal. You know, God made us to heal. You know, when you cut yourself, what happens? Your skin starts immediately trying to heal itself. That's what happens to that wound that they open up and so they have therapies where people have to keep that wound open. There has to be, you know, every day there has to be effort to keep that wound open because of this pretend now. They're pretending that that's a female body part. Sometimes they add breasts, synthetic. And now everyone pretends that this poor human being is a woman. And what we're seeing is that more and more you hear about people who are becoming ex-transgender people, detransitioners. Why? Because it is futile to resist God. There's no joy in that. I mean, it's just obvious. You just think about what they're doing. Or the reverse of that, the same thing, trying to add something, a human invention, and adding it to the human body and thinking that you're doing something to make them that gender. It is patent absurdity and it only leads to misery.

Now, we know that's obvious in that area. The world needs to understand that, I mean, how awful it is that this is happening. Our hearts should break for people and we should be the most compassionate people to those who have transitioned, who want to come back because God is a God who works mightily in human hearts. There are things that you can never change, but he can still give you back in some ways the years the locusts have eaten. He can do things in your life. Though you now may be a eunuch, you've

made yourself a eunuch, man's made you a eunuch, yet you can still worship and love God and be all that he originally made you to be in your soul. And that's really the way it always is. Man's way, man's invention always has an initial appeal. It's appealing initially. I know it's hard to imagine that particular area is initially appealing. Let's take something different that's a little easier to see the appeal. Let's just take biblical sexual morality, what the Bible says about what sex is supposed to be. The Bible says that the sexual relationship was created by God for the well-being of humanity, that it is intended to be enjoyed in a covenant relationship of marriage between one man and one woman for life. Exclusive one man, one woman for life. This is what God says. The world says that is insane. That is repressive. That is oppressive. You are repressing your desires. That's unhealthy. You are doing evil by saying that you should abstain from sex until you're married, right? They say you're doing evil. You're an evildoer. You're hurting us. They believe that sexual freedom is the way, and so that having multiple partners is fine, and that having relations with someone you've just gotten to know, that's okay. You don't need a covenant of marriage. You just need to enjoy that. In fact, it makes sense to many people, even many Christians, it makes sense that maybe we should live together before we get married, so we find out how compatible we are. And there's an appeal, an initial kind of appeal to that. It appeals to the flesh of human beings to fulfill those lusts and those desires. But what do we know? The futility of human invention, to think that you can do it another way than what God says. God's way is to be pure and to protect. To live truly as a man and a woman before you're married, it's more like you're a brother and sister than that you're a man and wife. That's the way it should be. And then the joy of all that a man and wife are comes after that covenant is entered into.

Now, when we say that, that sounds just as crazy to them as what we look at the whole transgender thing. They think we're nuts. And some of you may be struggling even with this issue of biblical morality but God's way is best. God has designed. The truth is, God is the one who invented sex. Now, think about that. Think about that. God invented sex. It was his idea, his creation for the well-being of humanity. His idea. Satan and the world have given nothing to humanity. I love what C. S. Lewis says in his book, "The Screwtape Letters." He talks about, he puts in, it's a dialogue between two demons essentially, Screwtape and Wormwood. And Screwtape is telling Wormwood, this demon that's working in this human's life that's become a believer, he's telling him how to entrap him, how to enslave him. And Wormwood has reported to Screwtape, Screwtape's the uncle, his nephew, Wormwood, reporting to his uncle. They're writing letters back and forth to each other. Interesting concept for a book, isn't it? And Wormwood writes and says, "I've got him caught up in moral impurity, in lust, sexual lust." And Screwtape writes back and says, "Oh, the pleasures, that's a wonderful way to capture his soul. Keep up the good work, but be careful." Now this is a demon talking to another demon, and I think Lewis is exactly right about this particular point, not about a demon talking to another demon and all that, but the point he's going to make. He says, "Remember that," now these are two demons talking, remember, so when they say the word the enemy, who are they talking about? God. So he says, "Remember that when you are dealing with the pleasures, it's a great way to capture souls, but be very careful, because when you are dealing with pleasure, you are on the enemy's ground. All of our research, all of the demonic research, all the laboratories in hell that are going on trying to research, we've

never produced one pleasure. Our formula is to take the pleasures God has created and to convince them to seek that pleasure in ways other than which he has commanded and ordained. That's the formula, Wormwood."

He says the formula is to move from the natural to the unnatural. What's natural? One man, one woman for life. That's natural. That's where God intended it. That's where the beauty of that relationship reaches something approximating the unity that we experience spiritually with the Lord. I mean, there's something about that that is profound. Luther talked about this, that the marriage relationship, now think about Luther, Martin Luther, he was a man who was a Roman Catholic monk. He had taken a vow of celibacy in his lostness as a Roman Catholic monk. The Lord saved him through reading the Scriptures, teaching through Romans. He's reading the Bible and he gets saved reading Romans 1:17. I mean, it was a pivotal verse in his salvation, "I'm not ashamed of the gospel. It's the power of God unto salvation to the Jew first, after that the Greek. For in it, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith," that righteousness comes through faith. Luther saw that. The way that you become righteous with God is through faith. You trust in what God has done, and he gives you righteousness as a gift. Luther sees that. He's saved. He then tries to reform the Catholic Church. "Hey, guys, what we've been teaching is all wrong. Surely the Pope will help me out with this." And the Pope says, "No, you're anathematized. I curse you. You need to stop, get out of the Catholic Church, I'm going to, in fact, I'm going to kill you." And that's basically what starts the Protestant Reformation. It's called Reformation because it was intended to reform the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church rejected it. Well, Luther, when he's now in Christ, his newfound liberty, he realizes he can get married. This whole celibacy thing was a crock. And he marries Katie von Bora, who herself had been in a female nunnery. They get married and Luther talks about the incredible joy and privilege that is to be enjoyed in the marriage covenant, the romantic relationship. And he talked about it, he said, listen, this is something, the oneness of two souls who have united themselves in covenant marriage, somehow, this picture's Christ and the church. There's something, the mystery about this is great. This is what Paul's talking about in Ephesians 5:22 to 33. He says, "A man shall leave his father and mother, cleave to his wife, the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great, but I'm speaking about Christ and the church." Christ and the church, the man and the woman becoming one flesh, there's something incredible about that. Luther said there's something that is almost heaven in that union, that God has given that. Think about that, the joy and pleasure of serving one another, loving one another, caring for one another, giving yourselves to each other, not exploiting one another. And Satan takes that and drags it through the mud, drags it through dung and urine, and says, "This is what you should do." And the world says, "That's what we want."

The Christian knows God's way is true and right and if it's true and right there, it's true and right in gender, and if it's true and right on gender, it's true and right on gender roles. When he says a man's to be the head of the home, a man's to be the head of the home. When he says men are to lead in the church, men are to lead in the church. It's offensive at first, yeah. It's troubling, it's unsettling. Yeah, just like it was when you learned that you couldn't just give in to your pleasures after you became a believer, you couldn't keep on seeking sexual pleasure the way that you had it. You struggled with it, but you were

trying to put it off now, because God doesn't want that anymore. And so this idea of complementarianism essentially is the biblical understanding of male-female relationships. Complementarianism is the idea that the Bible teaches that men and women are equal in dignity and glory, but they have different roles in the home and in the church; they have different complementary roles. and that maleness and femaleness somehow complete one another as well. This is where even there's application to how you live as a single man or a single woman. There's aspects of being masculine and feminine that relate to this. Masculinity is more about initiation and courage and movement, and femininity is more about responding and affirming and supporting. Now how that exactly works out with all the uniqueness of each individual person, we have different strengths. We're not to hide our strengths, we're to use them for the glory of God but there's something about God's design that we need to appreciate and we need to embrace.

So complementarianism, I think, is what the Bible teaches. Egalitarianism is the idea that really gender roles are whatever you make them, that if there's any difference when God's talking about headship, it's the function of the fall. This is one of the more popular ways of packaging it in evangelicalism, to say that man's the head, woman is support, well, that was a function of sin and the fall, they say. And once you're redeemed now, and the Bible does say things like Galatians 3:28, there's neither male nor female in Christ Jesus. That's right, it says that. Equal in power and glory. It also says we're joint heirs, just like it does here in this verse, in verse 7, fellow heirs of the grace of life. Equal before God absolutely but equality does not mean there's not a functional subordination, and one of the strongest arguments for this, just logically, is it's also we see functional subordination in the working of the Trinity in creation and redemption. The three persons of the Godhead relate in a way that there's functional authority. The Father administers everything. The Son is sent by the Father. It says that over and over, I think it's like 35 times in John, John's gospel, he speaks of being sent. When you are sent, you're under someone's authority. So he says that, and then he sends the Spirit but they're equal in power and glory.

So the futility of man's invention, the reality is that when you reject God's design for the sexual relationship, back to that first issue, you may think there's an appeal to doing it your way and doing it the world's way. There's an appeal to human invention. What man says is good seems to look good and there's an attraction to it but the end is futility. I want to go back to that Lewis reference, C. S. Lewis, Wormwood and the dialogue between Screwtape and Wormwood. Screwtape tells Wormwood, "Be careful because when you're in pleasure, you're on the enemy's territory. We've not ever invented any pleasures. The formula for us is to move from the natural to the unnatural. Take them from that which is natural to that which is unnatural. And what you'll do," he says, "this is the formula, you will create, by doing, taking them from the natural to the unnatural, you will create an ever-increasing lust for an ever-diminishing pleasure." Write that down: an ever-increasing lust for an ever-diminishing pleasure. You will lust more. You will cause in the human heart a greater and greater, more intense lust, and yet you will get in return for this greater and greater lust, less and less pleasure. "That's the formula," he says. "That's our father's formula." Now remember what we're talking about. We're talking about two demons. He's talking about Satan. "That's what really gladdens the heart of our

father, to get a man's soul, and to give him nothing in return." That's the satanic formula. More and more lust, for more and more unnatural things, for less and less pleasure, and more and more bondage.

That's the playbook and that's what happens in the transgenderism. I mean, to think that you can be God. God is the one who makes every single person. Psalm 139:23, actually 139 is more on verse 15, where it says that, "You knew me, my inward parts, before I was born. You formed my substance in my mother's womb. I praise You because I'm fearfully and wonderfully made." It's David speaking about his own body, his soul, his creation, "God, You made me. You formed me." And so, God makes a man a man and a woman a woman, and the fact that there are some occasional problems where someone is born and that's not correct, it just speaks to the reality of the fall, that things aren't as they ought to be. The exception clarifies and defines the rule. God makes male and female and to fight against it initially, there is a pleasure about it. I mean, to think that you can be what you feel, you can be what you want, that's attractive to our sinful human hearts and there's something in it that's almost true because as human beings we were created for glory, we were created for a perfect world. One day we'll be there. And so every human heart, God's placed eternity in our hearts and everybody knows there's something more, they're created to rule, they're created for greatness and that is true but the greatness comes in submission to God, not in audacious, arrogant rebellion. Rebellion leads to destruction. Submission leads to glory.

And so, that's what happens with sex, that's what happens with gender, and the same thing happens in a less, it's a less destructive thing, at least physically, to reject gender roles in the marriage, but who knows what's happening in the spiritual realm when you don't accept these things. How are you hindering the salvation of your children? How are you hindering the salvation of people who look at you? Remember, because the marriage relationship's a picture of Christ and the church. That's what Ephesians 5:22 to 33 says. The longest passage in the Bible on marriage, and it starts off with, "Wives, be submissive to your husbands as unto the Lord for the husband's the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, he himself being the Savior of the body." And then he goes on to say, and this says to young women, what kind of man should you marry? A man that you can submit to because you're going to have to submit to him, and Ephesians 5:25 gives you an idea of the kind of man you ought to be looking for. After he says, "Wives, submit to your husbands," for those three verses, he says, "Husbands, love your wives as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her." You want to submit to a man who has sacrificial love, who loves Jesus and who will sacrifice for you. That'll make it easier for you to submit, even though you're going to have to, even if you marry an ungodly man like we see in 1 Peter 3. Hopefully you didn't marry somebody like that. You were disobedient to the Lord if you were already a Christian and you married an unbeliever. But God's grace will cover your sin, but you're going to have a harder road. But on the front end of marriage, choose a man that you can submit to that loves Jesus.

Now when that happens, when a woman is submitting to her husband and believing that God is working through him, even when she doesn't agree with him, like I said, I've told you before in previous messages, submission doesn't mean you're a doormat, not at all.

As a helper, you are a helper. You've been created by God as a woman to help this man. He needs help. He needs help more than you need help. You can make it better without him than he can make it without you. I think that's clear from the Scripture. You read back in the story of Genesis 2, Adam doesn't even know he has a problem. I mean, seriously. He's created, he's put in the garden, and I mean, think what the garden must have been like. Think what he feels like. He's got no aches. Everything is perfect. The world is perfect. The animals are coming up to him. He's telling them what to do. He's giving them names. I mean, he's got work. He knows what to do. He feels empowered to do it. God's given him clear direction. This is a man's paradise. And it was paradise, except there's something really big missing. But Adam doesn't say, "Lord, I've noticed that I'm missing something." He doesn't have a clue. God says, "It's not good for man to be alone." So he doesn't even know he needs the help. It's not good. And that "it's not good," when you read Genesis 1 into Genesis 2, Genesis 1, the seven days of creation, the six days, beginning of chapter 2 is the seventh day, you remember the refrain in Genesis 1? "God saw all that He made and behold it was good. God saw all that He made and behold it was good." Seven times in Genesis 1, it says that, with the final being after he creates man, male and female, on the sixth day, "And behold, God saw all that He made and behold it was very good." The seventh time, very good. Good, good, good, good, good, good, very good. Now chapter 2, verse 15, man's thinking everything's good, and God says, "No, it's not good. You have got a major problem that I need to fix."

So that shows man, we tend to not know how much we need our wives. This is why men tend to devalue. This is why we're told in verse 7, we're going to look at next week, Lord willing, you're to bestow honor upon her because you should value her way more than you're prone to value her. You were not prone to even, Adam wasn't prone to, and now add sin and pride to it, and we're not prone to, but he's like, "This is what you need." I mean, think about the picture of how God makes woman. Remember the story. Adam doesn't know what's going on, Adam's fine, Lord says, "No, you need a helper." He puts him into a deep sleep and he makes a woman. Now, why didn't God just take some dust? He did that for Adam. Wouldn't you have thought that? I mean, you read the text, you know, you sometimes try to read the text as if you've never read it before, so you let it surprise you. God takes the dust of the earth, forms it, breathes into the man's nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being. Does God just like to do things different for the heck of it? Why not do that when he makes woman? What's going on there? God takes a rib out of the man. Doesn't he need that? Well, God has planned it all out. He's not making it up as he goes along, so apparently he gave him something that he could do without in one sense, but maybe he was doing that to say how important this is to you. And so when the woman is brought to the man, and interestingly, he doesn't find her, God creates her and God brings him to her. This is a picture of what every marriage is. This is why when you go down the aisle, who walks down the aisle with the young bride? Her father, and he gives her away. That's the picture of marriage. A man receives a wife. It's a good thing for a man to find a wife. You found a wife. You receive a wife. But a father gives that wife. God gave the wife in Genesis 2. Interestingly enough, in Revelation 21, the end of all time, marriage picture of Christ and the church, what happens? The bride has been adorned for her husband, and she is presented to her husband, made ready in heaven by God, brought to her husband Christ. That's the beauty of it.

So, he's saying, "This woman that I've given you is nearer to you as if she's a part of you. She completes you, truly, in the truest sense." And Adam's response, this is two, "This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman." The ecstatic response when he sees this woman, "This is exactly what I need." Here he gets it. "Yes, I didn't know I had a problem, but this is what I needed. Thank You, Lord." And that's the nature of every marriage. The man needs the woman like that. It's like you found what you've been missing. You say, "Well, I've got to find the right one." Well, don't worry so much about that. Find a woman who loves God, who loves Jesus, that her dad says that you're fit to marry her, and he will give her to you, and marry her, and trust that God has brought you together because he has and don't look back. Even when you're an older man, what are you supposed to do? Delight in the wife of your youth. That's actually from Proverbs 5, a wonderful passage on sexual purity. Father speaking to his son, saying, "Listen, watch out for the adulteress. Don't be captivated by the adulteress. The adulteress leads to death." And at the end of that same chapter, he says, "Delight yourself in the wife of your youth." So you're an older man, you've been married for a while, but the newness has worn off. No, you actively delight in the wife of your youth and this is what the Scripture says, "Let her breast satisfy you always. Be exhilarated with her love." That is the Bible telling you that. You see, it's God's idea. He says, "This is the way to live." And so, delight in her, cultivate that delight in her, rejoice in the gift, the good gift that God gives you when he gives you a wife.

You love your wife like that. Your wife is to follow you like this, she's to bring all of her gifts. You need help so she doesn't just come along as a yes woman, you know, "Whatever you say, honey." No, that's not what submission is. You come to an issue, you have an opinion, she has an opinion. A lot of times her opinion is better than your opinion. We've got some men that have been married more than five or six years there. Because God gave her to you because you need her. You weren't complete. So why would you be despising her opinion? What a stupid thing to do. How foolish is that? God has given you the wife he's given you, learn to listen to her, and he's going to say, "Live with her in an understanding way," which we'll look at, Lord willing, next week. But basically, just delight in it. This is God's design.

And for a wife, you then give your opinion strongly, clearly, you contend for it. You study. You continue to learn. You continue to grow in the Lord. You continue to offer wise counsel to your husband. And when he doesn't follow it, sometimes you go back and you say it again, "Honey, I really think this is important." Sometimes you say it as he's driving off the cliff. You say, "Honey, I really think this wasn't good." I mean, obviously you don't drive off the cliff, but it feels like you are. And this is what he's saying, if you're like Sarah, she called Abraham lord, and if you do what is right, if you do what God says to do, trust the Lord and submit to your husband as unto the Lord, and not be frightened with any fear, don't be frightened of what you're afraid might happen, just trust God and his design, if you do that, the Lord will work mightily through your submission. But it's not, again, it's not being just a yes woman, it's being, "Honey, I really think this is a mistake, I really think you need to do this." But finally, when he says, "Listen, I've made my decision," you say in your mind, "Thus says the Lord. The Lord has spoken through

him. It may be a bad decision, we may have some consequences we have to go through, but if that's the case, that's where God wants us to be. If that's the case, if we're going to go into a valley and we're going to suffer, that's where God wants to grow me and my husband next. That's where God wants to take our children next. I trust the Lord."

That is powerful, powerful faith, and when a woman acts like that and lives like that, and a man then learns how to live with his wife in an understanding way, it looked so odd to the world. They said, "You guys are doing evil. This is crazy. Are you out of your mind? You're oppressing us with your crazy values. Your example is offensive to me." You just keep on loving them, and you keep on doing what God's word says, and more and more will begin to look at you and puzzle at you, and they look at your character, they're looking at your life, and they're starting to see the power of God and the wisdom of God and they're going to say, "You are living life as God intended it. You are living life as I was meant to live." And they're going to glorify God and come to Christ. And the beauty of it is, is that not only we have a better way of living, we're not saying that, it's not just the futility of man's invention, and my second point, which I've already kind of covered, was the beauty of God's design, and the third point is the glory and sufficiency of God's provision, of Christ's provision. The glory and sufficiency of Christ's provision because, listen, nobody can pick up the pieces if someone is broken because of sexual perversion has gripped their life, or if someone is broken because they've gone through a gender reassignment, the maiming of that. If someone is broken because they've been rebelling against God's design, we can say, "Listen, there is an answer. The answer is Jesus. You can't change yourself. I have great news for you. Jesus Christ died on the cross to pay for your sins, but not only to pay for your sins," as we saw in chapter 2, verse 24, right before this in 1 Peter 2:24, "He bore Himself, our sins in His body on the cross so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness." He bore our sins and not only did he save us from the penalty of sin, he saves us from the power of sin. You feel gripped by sexual perversion, you feel gripped by an inability to trust God, to live according to his design in marital roles, you've gone through the horror of this gender delusion, the answer is Jesus. Jesus will change your heart and in his wounds, in his blood, you will find the power to change. You don't have the power, you can't work it up, but Christ is everything that you need. It's his death. You take your rebellious heart that doesn't want to submit to your husband, you take it to Christ on the cross and realize that he gives you back. As you go to Jesus saying, "Lord, I can't. I've been talking to that man. I can't I can't trust him. I can't submit to him," you go to Jesus and you give him that. He gives you back an ability to go to your husband and say, "Honey, I'm ready to follow you." And in your heart, "You know I'm trusting Jesus that You are my power, You're my righteousness, You submitted to the Father always, You never failed to do his will, Your meat and Your drink was to do the will of God, and You are my Savior, You are my power. I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me."

That is the power and so there's nothing that we can't do. Yes, it takes time, it takes obedience. You win the battle one decision at a time. One time you submit, then another time you do it, and over time you begin to become more and more accustomed to walking in truth and wisdom. The blessedness of letting God be God, this is where blessing is found, this is where life is found. I'm not going to try to live according to the world's

inventions, according to human opinion, according to my own personal desires. I'm going to live life according to God's perfect design and not just according to his perfect design, live according to his perfect design by Christ's sufficient power. It's the cross. It is the cross and the resurrection is our only hope. Union with Christ is what enables you to do what God has called you to do and as you do that, it will be beautiful. It is beautiful. And listen, a lot of times you feel like because we're fighting our own sin, we don't realize how much the beauty is coming through even now. You start obeying God a little bit, and a little bit more, and a little bit more, and his beauty and glory is shining in ways you can't imagine. So stay at it. Let's enjoy the blessing of living according to his design, by his power.

Let's pray.

Father, we love You, we praise You, we thank You for Your patience with us, Your mercy. We thank You, Lord Jesus, for doing everything necessary to save us. We think about our own rebellion, our audacity to want to live according to our desires, our ideas. We find the world so attractive, the lies are alluring. We confess that, Lord. Some of them are really compelling. You know our hearts and if it was up to us, we would say who can deliver us from this body of death? We thank You for the answer Paul gave, through Jesus Christ we can walk in holiness. Father, make us people who believe Your word and who are committed to it. Make us people who are bold in walking in faith, trusting You to give us the power we need to live according to Your design, to fulfill our roles. May the beauty of Your design be just set on the highest hill, on the lampstand, Lord. Put it on the lampstand. Let our light shine before men in such a way that they may see our good deeds and glorify our Father who is in heaven. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.