

## **Family Foundations, Part 1 – Marriage According to God (Genesis 1-3)**

*Preached by Pastor Phil Layton at Gold Country Baptist Church on November 9, 2008*

[www.goldcountrybaptist.org](http://www.goldcountrybaptist.org)

3 Sundays ago at this time we were at the very God-glorifying and Christ-centered Christian wedding of Kevin and Holly Freeman, officiated by Mark Freeman. Both solid Christian families all around, both sets of parents still married and love the Lord, the way it should be. Marriage has been much in the public light lately, and unfortunately it's not always the way it should be.

That same evening at the same time as the wedding, I heard of a local church that hosted a video simulcast about the attacks on those who believe in such traditional marriages, the discrimination and prosecution against Christian groups and others, etc. On the video call were people who have recently been in the news because of persecution they've received for biblical convictions about marriage being only between a man and a woman:

The Pastor in Sweden who preached from Romans 1 about homosexuality and was arrested, tried three times, found guilty by the High Court of Sweden and sentenced to one month in prison

David and Tonia Parker – In Massachusetts, David went to his son's school and explained that he wanted to opt his kindergartner out when homosexuality was being discussed. He was arrested, taken to jail, went through two trials that he lost, and the US Supreme Court refused to hear the case last month.

Elaine Huguenin -- She is the 25 year old photographer that was fined \$7000 by the state of New Mexico for refusing to film a gay/lesbian "celebration."

Chuck Limandri – attorney for the four fighters that were forced to march in a Gay Pride Parade

Bob Tyler – attorney for the two doctors who lost their case before the CA Supreme Court when they refused to artificially inseminate an unmarried woman (lesbian).

Scott Hoffman – from New Jersey , director of the Ocean Grove, New Jersey church camp grounds where they lost tax exemption for refusing to perform a lesbian civil union

Almost exactly one month ago, just 120 miles from here, a first grade class took a school-sponsored trip to a homosexual wedding. Eighteen first graders traveled to San Francisco City Hall Friday for the wedding of their teacher and her lesbian partner, The San Francisco Chronicle reported. The school sponsored the trip for the students, ages 5 and 6, taking them away from their studies for the same-sex wedding ... The lesbian teacher's wedding was officiated by San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom.<sup>1</sup>

It was referred to as a “teachable moment.” *Our nation is in need of a teachable moment!* Maybe a better way to say it is, our world needs to be teachable to the teaching of God's Word, beginning with the first page of the Bible we'll begin with today. Have you ever noticed that those who are all for teaching tolerance are very intolerant of the biblical perspective we're going to see in Genesis 1-2 today? Well, for the *truly teachable*, God's Word clears the fog coming from the Bay Area and our culture, and it does it from page 1.

<sup>26</sup> **Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness;** and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” <sup>27</sup> God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; **male and female He created them.** <sup>28</sup> God blessed them; and God said to them, **“Be fruitful and multiply,** and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” <sup>29</sup> Then God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you; <sup>30</sup> and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to every thing that moves on the earth which has life, *I have given every green plant for food*”; and it was so. <sup>31</sup> God saw all that He had made, and **behold, it was very good.** And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Genesis 2:18-25 (NASB95) <sup>18</sup> **Then the LORD God said,** “It is not good for the man to be alone; **I will make him a helper suitable for him.**” <sup>19</sup> Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought *them* to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. <sup>20</sup> The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him. <sup>21</sup> So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. <sup>22</sup> The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. <sup>23</sup> The man said, “This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man.” <sup>24</sup> **For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.** <sup>25</sup> And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

Last year I preached through the first 3 chapters of Genesis on Sunday mornings, and then we took a break in the mornings to go through some real foundational studies on the church, the purpose of the church, glorifying God in the church, as well as verse-by-verse studies through Titus and now Psalm 119 which we will continue to study in the months ahead. I have always desired, though, to return to the book of Genesis and continue our study because its truths are so fundamental and worldview-shaping, especially in the first 11 chapters which are really foundational for the rest of the Bible, NT theology, and much of what Jesus said.

So as we resume our studies in Genesis on Sunday nights, I want to review and reinforce some very basic truths we need to be reminded of and grounded in, for this “Family Foundations series.” I believe it’s more important than ever that we have a good grasp of what the beginning of the Bible teaches about family, marriage, gender roles, manhood and womanhood, a biblical view of children, dealing with sin within families, departures from God’s original design for the family, and even learning from some of the bad examples of families in Genesis. Those will be some of the messages in the weeks ahead, starting with *marriage* tonight.

Genesis is the book of beginnings, the book of origins. It is the foundation of all of life, a fundamental explanation of who we are, where we came from, the explanation of the way things are today because of the fall into sin in chapter 3. We’ll pick up in chapter 4 in a few weeks, but there are some truths from 1-3 that we first need to re-establish in context.

Genesis 1 gives a chronological literal day-by-day account of the creation in a high-level fashion. Chapter 2 gives additional details, especially verses 15-25; important details about what happened *on day six* after Adam and the animals were created. Chapter 1 gives the summary overview, while chapter 2 more fully describes the unique creation of male and female in God’s image, the climax and crown of creation. We have here God’s infallible Word for man, and woman, and marriage.

*What is, God's Definition of Marriage?* Let's start in Genesis 1:27

<sup>27</sup> God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; **male and female He created them.**

This is the first definitive text on mankind and marriage – in the beginning God created a male and a female. From here through the end of chapter 2, the main subject is mankind, and marriage in particular. Look at the end of chapter 2 which sums up the section:

<sup>24</sup> **For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.**

In Matthew 19, Jesus clearly saw this portion of Scripture as definitive, as defining marriage in God's eyes, not in the eyes of the opinions of the Rabbis. The way He answered their question I believe is the best pattern for us to interact with people about questions relating to marriage, even with the unsaved (the Words of Christ are an answer to the unsaved; He's not just talking about principles for Christians in marriage – cf. 1 Cor. 7).

Matthew 19:1-12 (NASB95)

<sup>1</sup>When Jesus had finished these words, He departed from Galilee and came into the region of Judea beyond the Jordan; <sup>2</sup>and large crowds followed Him, and He healed them there. <sup>3</sup>*Some* Pharisees came to Jesus, testing Him and asking, "Is it lawful *for a man* to divorce his wife for any reason at all?" <sup>4</sup>And He answered and said, "Have you not read that He who created *them* from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE, <sup>5</sup>and said, 'FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH'?" <sup>6</sup>"So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate." <sup>7</sup>They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE AND SEND *her* AWAY?" <sup>8</sup>He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way. <sup>9</sup>"And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery." <sup>10</sup>The disciples said to Him, "If the relationship of the man with his wife is like this, it is better not to marry." <sup>11</sup>But He said to them, "Not all men *can* accept this statement, but *only* those to whom it has been given. <sup>12</sup>"For there are eunuchs who were born that way from their mother's womb; and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men; and there are *also* eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to accept *this*, let him accept *it*."

God's definition of marriage: ONE MAN, ONE WOMAN, ONE FLESH FOR ONE LIFETIME

Genesis 1 & 2 proves authoritatively for all time what God's defining design is for marriage in how He created Adam and Eve:

- God did not create spares or backup spouses just in case; divorce wasn't to be an option from the beginning.
- God didn't create or intend multiple spouses at once, i.e., He didn't make Eve and Genevieve so Adam could have 2 wives at once, or could dump one when he decided he didn't love one anymore; that was never to be an option
- Sometimes people wonder and ask why the Mosaic law did not more explicitly say things like "Don't divorce" or "Don't have multiple wives" (Deut. 24 does regulate divorce and remarriage, and Deut. 17 does forbid kings multiplying wives as ancient kings often did, cf. NT "husband of one wife" language). But Jesus doesn't rely on any later law or revelation beyond Genesis 1-2 to prove God's absolute standard for marriage. Have we not read?
- God did not two of the same gender, which rules out same-sex marriages or relationships.

Later laws against homosexuality were just reiterations of God's original plan

Genesis 1:27-28 further rules out same-sex marriage by the very commission (or better the *blessing*) God gives the married couple:

<sup>27</sup> God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; **male and female He created them.** <sup>28</sup> God blessed them; and God said to them, "**Be fruitful and multiply**, and fill the earth

The first purpose or role God gives to the first couple (we'll look at the purposes of marriage next time) is to reproduce, which of course is impossible without a man and a woman.

The excellent book God, Marriage, and Family points out secondly

'that homosexuality violates ... [marriage's] *complementary* nature. According to Genesis 2 and 3 – where the man is given charge of his wife, while the woman is placed alongside him as his "suitable helper" [see Gen. 2:18] – differences in gender role are an essential part of the Creator's design for marriage. These roles were assigned by God at Creation (Gen. 2:18, 20) and were reaffirmed both after the Fall (Gen. 3:16-19) and in NT teaching (Eph 5:22-23; 1 Pet. 3:1-7). Since these marital roles are tied inherently and unalterably to gender, same-sex partner cannot participate in ... biblical marriage ... Not only does homosexuality fall short of the biblical pattern of marriage with regard to *heterosexuality*, *complementarity*, and *fertility*, homosexual couples also often do not uphold other aspects of biblical marriage such as *monogamy*, *fidelity*, and *durability* ... homosexuality does not merely misrepresent or misunderstand God's design for marriage and the family at just *one* point; it rather skews the Creator's model at *almost every* point ... homosexuality is so "contrary to nature" (Rom. 1:26) that its participants cannot help but be aware of the fact that their actions are incompatible with the Creator's design for marriage.'<sup>2</sup>

This past Tuesday California voted on the nature of marriage for our State constitution, and a little more than half of participating voters cast their ballot to define marriage in this State as Gen 2:24 says ("a man" and "his wife" - similar props in AZ & FL passed)

- 8 years ago the support for this definition among CA voters was 61% pro, 39% against -- but polls through the Fall showed those numbers nearly flip-flopped in a few years, suggesting there were more like 50-60% *in favor of gay marriage* -- actual voter count ended up a little less than 50
- One news release said Prop 8's "approval marks a stunning upset in a \$70 million campaign that just weeks ago looked to be running in favor of preserving gay marriage rights."
- We can thank God in His Providence that true marriage has been upheld, *for now here*, but of course the war against a biblical definition and design of the family has only begun.

Ultimately, our main concern is not with the definition of marriage according to Massachusetts or Connecticut or Canada or Europe or even California, and we know truth is not based on ballot counts. What we want to concern ourselves with is what marriage is according to God.

That's what our focus is this evening. I don't want to focus just on the sin of homosexuality tonight or other departures from God's design, I would prefer to focus most time on God's design (although teaching the truth must also refute such errors). There are some I think who are up in arms about the sin of gay marriage as ruining our culture, while ignoring the far bigger and more common cultural calamity of traditional marriages that fail 30-50% of the time. Heterosexual sinners have actually played the majority role in the moral demise of families and our nation. Same-sex marriage is the caboose of the train, not the engine.

Homosexual sinners are not our enemy; they're part of our mission field. They need the gospel and the love and grace of Jesus that can free them from their bondage through the gospel that transforms sinners even as bad *as us in this room*, who were just as hopelessly depraved and lost in God's eyes. Even if our particular sins might be less repulsive to us, they weren't any less repulsive to God (Isaiah 64:6).

You've heard it said before but it's important to say again that our enemy and our struggle is not flesh-and-blood sinners ultimately, it is the spiritual forces and principalities in heavenly places.

It's true that God hates same-sex immorality, but He also hates the immorality of straight people, undoubtedly the sins of many who voted in favor of Prop 8. Yes, God hates homosexual behavior ... the Bible says He also hates divorce. Where is the equal outrage against unbiblical divorces, or even just the sinful selfish pride in so many spouses, which the Scripture also describes as an abomination to the Lord? Jesus said the sin of lust is serious enough to send one to hell! Southern CA is home to the pornography capital of the world – where is the equal fervor to address and protect marriage from the more prevalent dangers?

Are we also equally concerned with the anger and bitterness and unforgiveness in our hearts and the sinful speech we tolerate in our own homes -- also great enemies to marriage and family?

Jerry Bridges writes in his new book (which I highly recommend) called *Respectable Sins*:

But what about our conservative, evangelical churches? Has the idea of sin all but disappeared from us also? No, it has not disappeared, but it has, in many instances, been *deflected* to those outside our circles who commit flagrant sins such as abortion, homosexuality, and murder, or the notorious white-collar crimes of high-level corporate executives. It's easy for us to condemn those obvious sins while virtually ignoring our own sins of gossip, pride, envy, bitterness, and lust, or even our lack of those gracious qualities that Paul calls the fruit of the Spirit (see Galatians 5:22-23) ... on the whole, we appear to be more concerned about the sins of society than we are the sins of the saints. In fact, we often indulge in what I call the "respectable" or even "acceptable" sins without any sense of sin. Our gossip or unkind words about a brother or sister in Christ roll easily off our tongues without any awareness of wrongdoing. We harbor hurts over wrongs long past without any effort to forgive as God has forgiven us. We look down our religious noses at "sinners" in society without any sense of a humble "there but for the grace of God go I" spirit. We were incensed, and rightfully so, when a major denomination ordained a practicing homosexual as a bishop. Why do we not also mourn over our selfishness, our critical spirit, our impatience, and our anger? (p 19-20)

If we really want to protect marriage, we cannot just complain about one of its threats (or only what most offends us), and we cannot think that political measures are the ultimate weapon in this fight (God's Word is our weapon and it is a spiritual warfare).

Putting a new ballot line in the CA constitution does not restore marriage – there's a whole lot more than that to be done.

In our world, it's become increasingly important to define clearly what God's Word says and what we believe, so in our Church's Doctrinal Statement and Bylaws we now have this language:

### **MARRIAGE**

*We believe marriage is an institution established by God and defined by God's Word as exclusively the legal union of one man and one woman in which such "one flesh" union is to be a lifelong commitment (Genesis 2:18-24; Malachi 2:16; Matthew 19:1-6; Romans 7:1-3; 1 Corinthians 7:10-17; Ephesians 5:22-33). This church will uphold the honorable sanctity and blessedness of marriage in the Bible (Hebrews 13:4), and we believe any deviations or departures from God's design for marriage in Scripture (including but not limited to; adultery, fornication, incest, homosexuality, and any sexual relations before or outside of marriage as biblically defined above) are inconsistent with the teachings of the Bible and this church.*

It's been my experience at past churches that a large number of church discipline situations and counseling cases involve departures from God's clear teaching on marriage / family matters. This is such an important issue that God spends much of His opening Words to the human race presenting marriage as a gift intended for exclusive permanent and pure love – the foundation of the family and of society. This union of holy matrimony is prominent at the end of God's first chapter and virtually the entire point of the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter: Marriage is by God, He must be the focus, not us; God sets the rules, and they're for mankind's blessing.

It is after God creates both male and female, brings them together in what 2:24 describes as the first marriage and foundation for all marriage, God gives man and wife their joint commission for this world, and God looks at it all and pronounces "very good." (1:31)

Marriage of a man and woman is very good, according to God, regardless of the Roman Catholic Church's pronouncing it a sin and disqualification for their leaders to be married (that's proved to be not just bad theology through the centuries, but there's been really bad consequences of such bad theology for priests who are not able to fulfill desires from God in normal ways).

Marriage is very good according to God, who made one male and one female, even though many in our world would say such an exclusive presentation of marriage is discrimination against other "types" of marriages (as recent TV ads have tried to say).

Marriage is very good according to God, and is a gift from God to man and woman as so clearly presented in Genesis 2. Marriage is God's idea, God's institution, defined by God not us, and God knows what's best for man, which is a big idea of chapter 2.

Remember that this book of Genesis was the first part of the Torah scroll written by Moses to the Israelites over 3400 years ago as part of the law given before Israel went into the promised land. The reason or purpose of our passage is explicitly stated in 2:24:

<sup>24</sup> **For this reason** a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

Genesis 2:24 reminds us that marriage is God's doing. This story of the creation of Adam and Eve in sinless perfection and innocence, for each other, this is God's Word on marriage.

In the original context of Genesis 1-2, God inspired Moses to record these words to explain the basis and origin and sacredness of marriage, which would be important to stress as Israel had recently exited Egypt and would soon be interacting with Canaanites and other nations which would tempt Israel to depart from God's plan for monogamous God-honoring marriage. It also specifies that marriage was not simply a custom or tradition developed or evolved – marriage was instituted by God Himself.

*Gen 2:18-20 Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; **I will make** him a helper suitable for him." Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.*

Genesis 1 tells us God made the animals to be fruitful and multiply so we know He created male and female of each. The scene seems similar to the animals God led to the ark by twos, the pairs of male and female are paraded before Adam. After the first few hundred like that, you would notice a pattern: every creature has a partner. For every male God has created a suitable female counterpart fit for him. When will I see a suitable partner God made fit for me?

Most of day six is spent with Adam naming animal after animal, each which has a corresponding companion, he and she, equal yet different - but at the end of v. 20 and near the end of the day it's painfully obvious he hasn't found a suitable companion for him! There's an important lesson here.

In v. 21, God takes the initiative and puts Adam to sleep so that the man is completely passive while God goes about to meet this need of man and God reveals His grace in His provision for marriage. Marriage is portrayed as a covenant or relationship initiated by God, so it's very appropriate that God with Adam determines man's need, how He will fill that need, and what this covenant of marriage is like. Marriage is what God puts together (as Jesus said in Matt. 19).

This is completely God's doing, and marriage is clearly portrayed as gift for a man and woman intended for life. *READ V. 22.* As I said when we studied this passage last year, this is a beautiful picture: from Adam's side comes a sweetheart for Adam, a wife to be by his side, who in v. 22b, God brings to the man like the Father of the bride at this first wedding ever. It's true that God could have created woman right after Adam, but the way God created her was to make Adam all the more appreciative to God for his wife.

We get a sense of this in v. 23, where he erupts into spontaneous poetry and praise. (Most of your translations recognize this and indent it differently). This is the first words of man recorded and it is a song if not a shout. When he sees this beautiful person created from his side, one writer says Adam is “beside himself” with excitement (pardon the pun). The original has great excitement!

*ESV: 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.”*

Another translation has “‘At last,’ the man exclaimed.” The idea is finally, this is one like me, from me, for me, one to be a part of me! The Hebrew text is very emphatic here. "WOW! THIS one, this time, Finally - AT LAST!! Someone on my level and likeness, bone of my bone, from my body and nature! Someone I can become one flesh with, united for life in every level of intimacy (physical, emotional, spiritual).” Thank you, Lord!

I remember vividly our professor telling us in class at this point, “Men, this wedding day excitement, you need to keep constantly. If you lose this glow, it’s your fault [not hers, not God’s] ... You want to be with this one, you’re fist-pumping thrilled – this one – praising God for this one that He has given you.”

Marriage is a gift from God! He is the author and the inventor of it.

This is the relationship God intended and the response He intended

- Prov 18:22 "He who finds a wife finds a good thing [or "a treasure"] and obtains favor from the Lord"
- A wife is called “the delight of his eyes” (Ezek. 24:16)
- Eccl. 9:9 “Enjoy life with the woman you love all the days .. for this is your reward in life”
- Prov. 5:18 "Let your fountain be blessed and rejoice in the wife of your youth ... Be exhilarated always with her love."

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.protectmarriage.com/article/first-graders-taken-to-san-francisco-city-hall-for-gay-wedding>

<sup>2</sup> Andreas Kostenberger, *God, Marriage, and Family*, p. 202-3.