

God Made Marriage Good

Genesis 1-2

February 6, 2022

You may have heard or seen on the website that we're taking an extended break from Luke's Gospel in the exposition of Luke ah, to address the topic of marriage. It seemed like an appropriate time considering what Jesus said about divorce in Luke 16:18 that was corrective in nature and we did a sermon on that 1 verse, seemed appropriate to do that.

We also did a message the next week following that message, did a message on biblical sexuality that was polemical in nature. It was a sermon to address the perverse chaos that's resulted from the sexual revolution, and so those negative in tone messages,

truth from God's word that we need to hear, but negative in tone.

It really seems only fitting that we take some time to present a positive case for marriage and I have got a lot to say. I'm going to be moving pretty fast this morning, so I want you to pay close attention. This first message has an extended introduction to establish the not just this message, but the entire series.

So if you think my introduction is going a bit too long and you wonder when I'm going to get into the text of Scripture, just be patient. That's by design. We're going to get there, okay. As we present the positive case for marriage, what the Bible has to say about marriage, I would guess that in a group of this size the subject of marriage brings different thoughts to mind, raises different memories for each and every

person, evokes a range of sometimes contradictory emotions and feelings.

There's one has said marriage can be a little slice of heaven on earth and also a living hell at times. We all understand that and there are marriages that are strong and healthy and mature and filled with great, great joy. Many marriages like that, that I have seen and learned from and rejoiced in. And my own marriage just continues to grow in joy and satisfaction and contentment, in appreciation for my dear wife and what God has given me in marriage and my family.

There are others who don't have the, the same sense of rejoicing in marriage. Maybe at the start of a marriage, and they're still dealing with those issues of sinful selfishness and those prickly things that

they've got to get through and work through and it could be a very discouraging time.

Sometimes there's a, there's a marriage when one or both of the married partners are corrupt and negatively affect the marriage. I think it's also safe to say, safe to assume, that everyone and especially in a Christian assembly like this one, everyone knows that they ought to think really well of marriage.

We know from Genesis that God made marriage in creation week and he called it good, and so we ought to think it's good too. No matter what our lived-out experience is. We know from the New Testament that marriage is a picture of Christ in his church. And so, we know that marriage is good and that marriage is a blessing from God.

We also know at the same time that there can be a gap and sometimes a very wide gap, between what the Bible teaches with great depth, precision, theological depth tThere can be a, a difference between what the Bible teaches, what the Bible pictures in idyllic even lofty poetic language. I mean, think Song of Songs. There can be a gap between the biblical portrayal of marriage and its ideal. And the reality that many experience in their own homes.

Some married people can feel discouraged about their marriages when they compare what the Bible says with what they experience. When they see what the Bible teaches, and then they realize that what the Bible teaches, and then what they see in their own marriage, it doesn't seem to approximate in their own marriage what the Bible teaches, very well.

Some, some people the harder they try, the more difficult it becomes for them. Let's say a word here too about unmarried people. There are unmarried people that, whenever a church kicks off a series on marriage, they can feel left out. Like okay time for me to doodle during this time of six weeks of marriage series or whatever. Sometimes they can even feel more discouraged that they're left out of this great conversation about marriage. Sometimes they feel like they're missing out on God's best if they're not married. And that's not true, by the way.

If you just look at your Bible, you can see there's some great Christians we're not married like, the apostle Paul. Was not married, seem to have a very rich full life. And look at the Lord Jesus Christ himself. He was not married. He did the full will of God. He rejoiced in his days, even his days that on Earth ended in crucifixion and then he came through and triumph as

we like to speak about so much here. We realize that Paul, the Lord Jesus Christ, they were not married.

And so, for those of you who are here and you're not married, hang in there. There is a lot, a lot, a lot to learn on the subject of marriage, and there's a lot that pertains to you in the subject of marriage as well because marriage as an institution effects all of society. So, think about where you fit into that. Whether you are unmarried and been unmarried all your life, or whether you're divorced or widowed or whatever the case may be. If you're not married, I intend to preach a message for you at the end of the series.

So, I'm preaching at to the end of the series so you can't check out at the beginning of the series. You know stick around. Nevertheless, lest we be hasty in accusing the Bible of some kind of idealism about

marriage. But it really doesn't get, the Bible doesn't get marriage in a sinful world. They don't get my marriage. In fact, there's commands in scripture, I know, but there's an asterisk next to them, invisible to the common reader. But I see it, that my marriage, in my situation is unique and that doesn't apply to me, because it's just not dealing with reality.

Lest we be hasty and accusing the Bible of that. That it's idealistic, just a few moments of reflection and it's going to force us to admit that the Bible is very aware of life in a sinful world. And the Bible is also very honest about the reality of marriage. God portrays marriage throughout the scripture as it really is, and we really need to look no further than the marriage of Abraham and Sarah.

Right at the beginning, Abraham is the father of faith. The father of faith. He's bound to have a good and exemplary marriage for us all to follow right? Caution you about making a distinction between descriptive and prescriptive texts of scripture when you read about Abraham and Sarah right. Abraham played the coward, in his marriage to Sarah. Remember he feared for his life when entering into foreign lands and he hid the fact that Sarah was more than just his sister related to him through parentage.

She was actually his wife, and that's the predominant preeminent relationship that she has to him and yet he downplayed that, he hid it. He asked her to hide it. He did this twice. He first deceived Pharaoh and then Abimelech and Sarah was brought into these harems of these powerful kings, and it was only by divine intervention that she was spared from being used that way. No thanks to Abraham. No thanks to his non-

existent sense of husbandly protection, hey man,
where'd his spine go? Where did his father of faith,
where did your trust in God go?

Sarah's no jewel either. She failed to believe God's
promise to her husband that she herself in her own body
would bear the son of promise and she'd do that in her
old age. And so, failing to believe she tried to
fulfill the promise in a fleshly way, by giving her
handmaid Hagar to her husband. Yeah, that's going to
turn out well. When the inevitable happened, Hagar
became pregnant, gave birth to a son, Sarah was looked
at by Hagar with contempt.

The scripture says when that caused the conflict that
you could have predicted, Sarah said to Abraham, you
did this. What? Wait a second. You're responsible for
my suffering, Abraham. Abrahams, like wait a minute,

whaaaat, that was your idea. You're not going to get off Abraham on a technicality, trust me. He's responsible, isn't he? He's responsible.

The marital sins of Abraham and Sarah extend from the sin of our first parents, Adam and Eve. We'll get into this another message, but there's a role reversal between Adam and Eve. And it kind of embeds itself into our sinful reality of what we're born into. Men being like their father Adam, in their natural state, and women like their fa, mother Eve, in their natural state and conflict ensues. Should we be surprised? The Bible is very honest with these things.

Adam and Eve, progenitors of the human race, and Adam through his sin, through the fall, sin comes to us by the doctrine of original sin. We understand the imputation of Adam's sin to all his progeny, and that's

us. And so, like their ancestors, the sins of Abraham and Sarah, just like Adam and Eve's sin had consequences on the entire human race, the sins of Abraham and Sarah had consequences as well. Ishmael and his Arabic descendants, Isaac and his Jewish descendants, that conflict continues to this very day to define the Middle East.

Every government of the Earth, their policies, their foreign policies, and their military thinking has to think about that conflict in the Middle East that goes all the way back to Abraham and Sarah. So, when we see what the Bible teaches about marriage. When we learn about the doctrine of marriage, we can rejoice in the Bible's doctrine of marriage, and we can say amen when we see how the Bible describes actual marriages. How it portrays the marriages of sinful people, we have to look at that and then look at ourselves and admit, oh me.

Sometimes married people wonder if they can survive their marriages. Dorothy Patterson, she's the wife of the famous Southern Baptist theologian and statesman Paige Patterson and he served the SBC as president for a, a term, also two of its seminaries. He served as president of two Southern Baptist Seminaries, and his wife Dorothy was quite a known character, she was quite a character too, but she was quite a known lady for her ministry to women. She had a soft heart toward women and she was once interviewed at an event for seminary wives.

These are women who are married to men who are training for the ministry and that always has a unique set of challenges for the wives and families of seminary men. So Mrs. Patterson had a soft spot in her heart for these women and she was asked by one of these young seminary wives, "Mrs. Patterson, in all of your years

of marriage to Doctor Patterson, did you ever consider divorce?" Without hesitation she said, "Divorce? No never, now murder." We laugh at that because we know kind of what she means, right?

Marriage is this intimate, intimate relationship. It's this institution that doesn't feel institutionish, it's so close and personal and relational. Relationship with another human being that goes really deep. It has a spiritual significance of the communication of two minds in close connection and that's portrayed in the intimacy of the body as well, that is exclusive to that man, and that one man and that woman for the whole life. Because of that intimacy, marriage involves the risk of hurt. It's about bringing another person of the opposite sex, someone that we really do fail to understand well. Bringing that person close to us, in underneath the armor, where words can penetrate the heart, where

actions and inactions can hurt very deeply, leave lasting scars, and yet marriage remains. It is a durable institution.

Marriage is an arrangement that no matter the difficulty, it seems, no matter the pain that people endure, we simply as a human race, cannot refuse to enter into it. We keep marrying and giving in marriage, don't we? We're drawn to marriage. We're inclined to it. We're eager to enter into marriage, and I realize that there are people here and there who think the grass is greener outside of marriage. They imagine life would be far easier if they'd never been married at all, but I highly doubt that.

Among those who get divorced, many don't stay single for very long, but they tend to remarry. It would seem that in spite of any difficulty, in spite of what can be great relational pain and emotional hurt, there are very few who want to forever get out of marriage. For many, marriage, even Christian marriage, especially as the husband and wife grow in Christian maturity, marriage is really a little slice of heaven on earth. For others though, absent the maturity or absent faith in Christ

altogether, marriage can be quite the opposite of that. One major mark of immaturity is, among those who enter into marriage or try to practice marriage with a false set of expectations.

I see this all the time as the source of so much disharmony and strife, disunity, fighting, arguing, all the rest, false expectations. And that's really what I want to do in this opening message. I want to disabuse you of false expectations about marriage, and I want to establish you're thinking about marriage on a biblical foundation. So, let's, let's take the false expectation, we all hold, we all share. We all have some form of that. And let's just, let's just look at it very critically together, okay, let's, let's look at it critically. And then whatever is false, let's kill that together. Okay, just have a big killing party of false expectations. And then we'll go back to the Biblical Foundation. We'll say that's where we build. That's what we're going to understand together, okay.

Many false expectations, many, many false notions about marriage, but, and I can't cover them all right now. I'm actually just going to hit one up front, and it's really the

main one. The main false expectation and it's perpetuated everywhere today, everywhere you look. The main false expectation perpetuated today in this emotionally oriented, highly sentimentalized, Disneyfied culture, romanticized, pornified, highly psychologized culture. This is just the modern world we live in.

But the predominating false expectation of today is revealed in the answer to this question, and it's a question that I ask every couple coming in for premarital counseling. Every, every couple that I'm going to potentially marry and bring them to the altar, to stand to make a covenant before God and man. I asked them this question, why do you want to get married? And you know the answer that most people give in today's world. Especially the unbelieving world, why do you want to get married?

The answer is some form of; because I want to be happy, because I want to be fulfilled, because I want to be satisfied, because I want to be content. I believe marriage will make me happy or happier than I am right now, and so that's why I'm getting married. Nobody says when you ask them why do you want to get married? They say, well, I want pain, misery, suffering, a lot

of insults. I want to be eviscerated in all my, you know, whatever.

People said they want to be happy. That's, that's the common answer to that question. That's why I want to be married. And listen, it is not only unbelievers who think like that. Okay, let's, let's just be honest here. We're Christians. Let's be honest, there are professing Christians who think exactly like that. Genuine Christians who think like that. Christians may answer with, when you ask them why do you want to be married? They say, well I want to glorify God. I just want to glorify God. I want to give myself in service for a lifetime for Christ's sake to this adorable creature before me, before you.

She says, I just want to serve this godly man with my life. I wanna submit to him, to be his wife. And he says, oh, I just wanna love this saintly perfect creature, woman as Christ loved the church and gave himself up. And I nod and smile and say, "Watch what happens in their first argument." Christian friend you may have said that, and you may really believe that you believe that. But here's what that first argument, or a series

of arguments just revealed. You got married because you two want to be happy and you want to be fulfilled and you want to be contented.

You're more infected with the cultural form of false expectation about marriage than you realize, and that's because you share the same sin nature with all of Adam's race. Let me quickly add that if you're operating on a biblical and not a worldly definition of happiness, but a biblical, if you're operating on a biblical definition of happiness, that happiness comes through holiness. Well then okay, you're on the right track. If life for you is what Jesus calls us to in Luke 9:23, it's a life of continual self-denial and cross bearing and obedience to everything Christ commands. You know what, marriage is going to be easy. You're just gonna flow through marriage, you're gonna sail.

If you've a, accepted what Jesus taught us in the Sermon on the Mount, that happiness is this state of blessedness and contentment and joy is coming through poverty of spirit and mourning over sin. Oh yeah, your sins going to be revealed in

marriage. That happiness is about being meek. It's about longing for righteousness. If you believe that happiness comes through you being merciful, pure in heart, a peacemaker, enduring persecution. Well, marriage to a fallen sinner is a pathway of happiness for you, my friend, because, you'll go through all those things. We don't naturally, though, operate according to that biblical paradigm, do we?

Instead, because of our sin nature that even as believers though we are born again, regenerated, have a new nature, we still have this sin principle within us that we still fight against. It's there whether you're aware of it or not, and it influences your thinking whether you're aware of it or not, and so it's better to be aware of what's affecting you and afflicting you and bring it to the fore and deal with it. We bring all kinds of false notions into our marriages. All kinds of fleshly, worldly, unbiblical notions of what happiness is and those ideas and expectations enter into our marriage.

People get married to fulfill romanticized ideals that they read in novels or that they watched in movies. People get married to

fulfill relational desires, to curb feelings of loneliness, and to complete themselves, and feel significant and that my life is meaningful and to bear children and that'll bring significance and all the rest. People get married for the sake of sexual fulfillment. Some frankly, look at marriage as a sanctified outlet for what is really, truly a sinful lust that needs to be repented of.

False assumptions, unbiblical ungodly presuppositions, they lead to false expectations and I can guarantee you they will be disappointed; it's guaranteed. By trying to make another human being do for you, what only God can do for you; that is to satisfy your deepest longings for intimacy, for significance, for purpose, for meaning, for joy. Listen by trying to make another human being do that for you, you're turning your spouse into an idol. You are saddling them with a burden that they cannot bear. They're just creatures like you. They cannot bear the weight of being the object of your false worship.

You're sinning against God in your idolatry. So, his blessing will not come upon you if you treat your spouse that way. You're

failing to live according to God's good purpose. His wise design for your life and for your marriage. So, let's do away with that false notion false expectation about marriage right from the beginning and we'll get some clarity about marriage and set some biblical expectations instead.

The Bible tells us that God made marriage good. He made marriage good. It's a pre-fall creation, pre-fall institution. He made it good. Like everything God made, marriage in, is an expression of his infinite unbounded heart of goodness. Marriage is an expression of his perfect wisdom of design, his perfect wisdom that it'll be the conduit of goodness and blessing to us. Marriage is an expression of his amazing kindness, his amazing grace to us. God made marriage good and his goodness through marriage is evident, firstly, in the structure and the form of marriage.

The structure and the form of marriage is a manifestation of God's goodness. Secondly though, this God's goodness is evident in marriage, through marriage, and what that structure in form provides, that marriage is a context of and a conduit for God's

blessing and God's goodness. So, marriage is good because it manifests the goodness of God in its structure and marriage is good because of, shows the goodness, manifests the goodness of God and what that structure provides. Those two things. So, for today we're going to cover the first.

We'll save the second for next week. For today we're going to see God's goodness in the structure of marriage and next week, we'll see God's goodness in what the structure is intended to provide for us. We are, though, as we think about the structure of marriage and marriage as an institution.

We are facing an uphill battle in trying to convince this culture that structure is good; that the structure provided by an institution is good, because the word out on the street today is if it's an institution, let's burn it down. If it's an institution, it's a systemic sphere of oppression and injustice and power dynamics; that's what institutions are. So, torch'em. Let's burn them all down and start with something else. What, what that something else is they haven't really put that together yet, but I can guarantee you it will look a lot like an

institution and then their children or grandchildren be burning that one down. So don't follow that. But we are facing an uphill battle because, the fact that structure in an institution is a good thing given by God, that's the thesis that we're going to pursue here.

So, we see in Scripture, marriage is the first institution that God created. Marriage is the very first institution God created and he designed that institution with a certain structure and order to it. He intended that structure, that order, those boundaries of that institution to give form and shape to individual human beings. Individuals come into the institution. They come into the form and the structure, and they're shaped and guided and pressed and directed forward to their blessing and to their good.

There are other institutions in society besides marriage, but marriage is the very first one. We think about government as an institution. We think about the workplace as a form of institution. The church, certainly an institution. But marriage is the very first one. According to *Webster's New Universal*

Unabridged Dictionary, prior to all this woke stuff going into dictionaries. That's my copy, it is safe, at this point anyway. But an institution is "a well-established and structured pattern of behavior or of relationships that is accepted as a fundamental part of a culture." An institution is a "well-established structured pattern of behavior or of relationships that is accepted as a fundamental part of culture."

That's what marriage is. That's what God designed marriage to be. Marriage is a well-established structured pattern of relationships and it is a fundamental part of culture. It is the essential part of culture. Marriage is indispensable to culture, which is why the dictionary entry cites marriage is a primary example of that, of what an institution is. Marriage, family, you could say that marriages is to family what the root, trunk and branches is to the fruit, but they are the same institution.

They are the means of perpetuating the culture forward, producing new marriages, and producing new families. Marriage, family it's the first institution God created and it makes it the most primary, the most fundamental institution of humanity.

In January of 2020 right before the pandemic, so this book didn't get probably the press or attention that it deserved, but it was Doctor Yuval" Lu "Levin who published a book called *A Time to Build. Time to Build* at the beginning of 2020 when, a lot of other people said no, it's time to destroy. But he called his book *A Time to Build* and the subtitle is this, *From Family and Community and To Congress and the Campus, How Recommitting to Our Institutions Can Revive the American Dream.*"

Interesting insightful book and in it, Doctor Levin refers to the family as quote "the first and more most formative of our institutions." He defines institutions. Here's his definition, institutions are quote, "the durable forms of our common life. The frameworks and structures of what we do together." That's his word. That's his definition. By the word durable, he means the way an institution and here's his quote, "the way an institution keeps its shape overtime, and so shapes the realm of life in which it operates."

So, durability means shaping overtime. It's durable, permanent you could say. By the word form he means, and here's a quote,

"form is a structure, a shape, a contour. It's the shape of the whole. It's the arrangement that speaks for its purpose, its logic, its function, and its meaning." Very important to say durability and providing form. Form shapes the whole. It arranges the parts and it points to its purpose, logic, function and meaning. So, since institutions are durable, they are by their very nature formative and determinative.

Levin explains it this way. He says, "Institutions structure our perceptions and our interactions and as a result they structure us. They form our habits, our expectations, and ultimately our character. By giving shape to our experience of life in society, institutions give shape to our place in the world and to our understanding of its contours. They are at once constraining and enabling the means by which we are socialized and so they are crucial intermediaries between our inner lives and our social lives." End quote.

Powerful institution and you can see in an institution, in the certain, in the shape that it's in today where people are redefining what marriage is or where marriages have been ripped

asunder by divorce, shred by immorality. That durability and permanence and forming and shaping effect of that institution, it still has an effect on the next generation. Kids growing up in single parent homes or not even knowing their parents.

Grandparents raising them, some aunt or uncle raising them, whatever. That shapes the way they think about the world. Think about your own marriages where parents stay together. Think about how much of a head start your children just being by, being raised in a, in a home where two parents are together.

Which I know that any school teacher here will tell you that is not happening in the elementary ed and junior high and high school. They can't find, they can basically gather into, on a one or two hands maybe an among dozens and dozens of kids. A number of people, maybe a half a dozen who have parents still together, living in the same home together. So, think about your marriages and staying together. In the power of that, just staying together. Shaping the kids and the grandkids for generations to come. Don't minimize that. This is what marriage does. This is what family does to form our character.

Parents, we think about this in terms of discipline. That's what it is. We're rerouting our children sometimes using the backside to direct them in the direction we want to go on the front side. And I'll quickly add that without that rerouting and without that discipline, you know, in a family, in a marriage, in a society, society unravels. We've been witnessing that for decades now in this country, haven't we?

Doctor Levin he's Jewish. He assumes a Judeo-Christian perspective of fallen nature and a fallen world. Life in a fallen world. And that's why he sees that institutions are a vital tool in a fallen world to shape character in a fallen world. He says quote, "the premise is that human beings are born as crooked creatures, prone to waywardness and sin," that there, "we will therefore always require moral and social formation, and that such formation is what our institutions are for." We agree with him on that, don't we?

Life in a fallen world institutions are so vital for shaping fallen nature, fallen character, to shape it and build it up into, strengthening into a godly character, in a mature form.

But what we read in Genesis chapter 1 and 2 tells us that God created the institution of marriage before the fall, not after. God created marriage as a formative institution, not for a world primarily with sin, but for a world without sin. He designed us to be mutable creatures. That is, we change. We live in a time space world, where overtime, we change either for the better or for the worse. We're always in some state of flux. Biologically, that's true. Skin cells are falling off of us and new skin cells are being formed all the time.

I don't know, how what the time period is, but it's true to say that the old is gone, the new has come in, in a matter of different a, you know, days, periods of how many skin cells fall off and how many are reformed and you're not the man you were or the woman you were. We're always changing and so God created us to be mutable, to be changing, to be growing, and that's why he created this institution of marriage. It's for the shaping of the individual and the formation and shaping of society before sin began.

In fact, God created two individual human beings along with the institution of marriage that would give them form and shape. And he created the individual and the institution. You could say, let's put it this way, the individual and the society created on the same day, same day. Institutions are not an afterthought. Institutions are not an oops, gotta do something about this fallen humanity. Institution, society, individual in society together on the same day.

God spent the first four days of creation forming and shaping his creation, and he spent the next two days filling it. That became the pattern for mankind created in his image to follow in procreation. The exercise of dominion in the world. So, the formative role of marriage and of the family. This is a good gift from God. It's to mold the mutable creature, it's to shape and mature that first couple, Adam and Eve, and to ensure blessing and flourishing for all their posterity. Marriage forms and shapes them as individuals, and then it fills the earth through procreation in the family.

What had been assumed from the beginning of time about all this can no longer be assumed in the Western World. Europe, the United Kingdom, the United States, all the countries and territories under the influence of the West and so we might just say the whole world, pretty much. While marriage is still an institution, people are now prone to resist its role as a formative institution in their lives. The culture of our time sees marriage as a performative institution, not a formative institution, a performative institution, it's a platform.

Marriage is a platform, like all other institutions have become. It's a platform for self-expression, not just marriage in the family, but in schools, the workplace, the church, the government. There's no institution that hasn't been touched by this, this new phenomenon no ins, no institution that has not become a stage for the expressive individual to show the world their authentic inner selves; get on the big stage and to show what they are, what they think they are on the inside, what they feel or intuit that they are on the inside, that's got to be shown in all the institutions of life.

Again, it's Yuval Levin who writes, quote "We have moved, roughly speaking, from thinking of institutions as molds that shape people's character and habits, toward seeing them as platforms that allow people to be themselves and to display themselves before a wider world." End quote. This is why you can see in so many romantic stories or romantic comedies that the story is all about the romance. It's about the buildup and bringing a couple together, and it culminates doesn't it, with the wedding?

That wedding is the, the thing that they spend tens and tens of thousands of dollars on because that is the performative stage to present this couple to the world and the story ends there. Not much interest in the actual reality of married life. Not much interest in the hard work that goes into investment of the man into the woman, and the woman into the man, of the parents into the children and into the family. Not much interest in the way the institution of marriage and family squeezes the, the soul, squeezes the heart and outcomes pride and self-centeredness.

And so, marriage as an institution is meant to squeeze the pride and self-centeredness out of the couple, it's to form and shape and mold them into models of sacrifice but not begrudging sacrifice, cheerful sacrifice, joyful sacrifice, grateful desire to give to another. Any attention that modern stories give to married life is usually negative, isn't it? The oppressive way that it stifles individual liberty, individual freedom, turns the man into a monkey and the woman into a tyrant. It's not true on either side. It's total perversion.

This is the world of the Enlightenment liberalism gone to seed, liberating the individual. In every institution then, serves the sovereignty of the sovereign self. The shift, we know it hasn't happened suddenly, it hasn't happened in a sudden way so that any of us would notice along the way. It's actually this changing view of our institutions has been a gradual thing. It's been happening over hundreds and hundreds of years. Carl Trueman traces the path of this in, if you'd like to get it, I highly recommend it, it's called *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self*.

And in *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self*, Carl Trueman says this, "Beginning in the 18th century with Jean-Jacques Rousseau, he regarded the community that is institutions as a hindrance to the full expression of the authentic individual. A point picked up and given artistic expression by the Romantics." So, the romantic poets, Wordsworth and others. Um, Shelley took his ideas and they romanticized it in poetry, and so throughout most of human history the commitment of the individual according to what Trueman says here, "was outwardly directed to those communal beliefs, practices, and institutions that were bigger than the individual and in which the individual found meaning."

Truman continues with this, "In the world of psychological man, however, the commitment is first and foremost to the self and is inwardly directed. Thus, the order is reversed. Outward institutions become, in effect, the servants of the individual and her sense of inner well-being."

He goes on to say this, "In fact I might press this point further, institutions cease to be places for the formation of individuals via their schooling in the various practices and

disciplines that allow them to make their place in society, and instead they become platforms for performance. Where individuals are allowed to be their authentic selves, precisely because they are able to give expression to who they are inside. For such selves in such a world, institutions such as schools and churches." And I'll just add in here, he wouldn't mind, marriage and family as well. "Institutions, they are places where one goes to perform, not to be formed, or perhaps better," when, "where one goes to be formed by performing." End quote.

Trueman traces this development over the past few centuries of Western thought, from Rousseau to the romantic poets, to the social and political philosophers, Nietzsche, Marx, Darwin, all the way to Sigmund Freud. Who is essentially about the self. And then finally to post modernists like Wilhelm Reich and Herbert Marcuse. These men represent the philosophies that have come to shape the culture of the West.

A culture that has displaced Christianity and for all those men for all those thinkers and poets and philosophers. Their hostility to Christianity is the logical consequence of their



enlightenment self-liberation thinking. It sees institutions as interfering with stifling individual freedom. So, for them, this means liberation from religion, liberation from the church, liberation from God, liberation from traditional morality.

For all of them Christian marriage is, for all of them, the most oppressive and repressive institution of all, because it does violence to individual self-expression by forcing each person to conform to the other. That's exactly what marriage is supposed to do, force us into conformity, shape us, mold us, squeeze us, and the Enlightenment philosophers in all their progeny say, no. That's why when you see little. Let's just redefine human being marriage, those kind of things.

The idea is not to get more participants into marriage. We heard that during the whole gay marriage debate right, 10, 15 years ago. We just, we just want, we just want everybody to enjoy this expression of marriage like you do. It's not true. The end goal is the abolishment of Christian marriage, it's the destruction of it. The destruction of the family, that's the end goal. Why? Because they hate God. Because the self has become God. That's

what they serve. So today psychological man, psychological woman, these expressive individuals, they see institutions as stages for their own personal performance.

The modern self feels no sense of accountability or submission to basic God given institutions, but instead pursues a project of redefining and reconstituting the institutions so they can reach their full potential. Family, marriage, even the concept of male and female, all of that has to conform to this tyranny of the inner ever changing highly psychologized concept of the self.

Two men raising children, two women raising children, transgendered people having babies, whatever identity they feel on the inside, however their feelings direct them, the psychological self is the true self. That inner self, that inner sense of identity is what they intend to make the outside world conform with. They restart, they start the reconstruction with their biological self and then they demand that every institution follow suit and accept them as they really are. This is where we find ourselves today.

We're all aware of this, whether you've kind of taken the time to articulate it in your own mind or read about it for yourself, you know this is truth about what we're seeing today. A world of radical deconstruction, a culture bent on destroying the very foundations of culture. Radical redefinition of marriage and family tears apart the fabric not only of society, but of humanity itself. And because marriage retains its power as a formative institution, it shapes and forms the culture of tomorrow by what it passes on today.

That's happening. It's been happening for hundreds and hundreds of years. You may think that, well that's the world, but like I said, it's in all of us as well. We grew up living and breathing and having our being in this world. We breathe in and out the culture that we live in. We bring that into the church. We don't check it at the door. It's in us. We have to expose it. We have to come to terms with the fact that we like the rest of the world, want to be happy and not always holy.

As Christians, though, we don't want that. We want happiness in God's way, in God's design, according to his model, according to his design, we want happiness through holiness. We want God. We want His holiness. We want his truth. We want him to shape us and change us. So that's the introduction. Pass through that. What's the way forward? Is there hope for marriage? Is there hope for society? Is there hope for our marriages?

I'll just say that the restoration of health to the culture, health to the society, really depends on it. This is where the battle is. Right here in the home. That'll happen for us as individuals, happen for us as a church, extending out into society if we start with the operating presupposition and we bar all other presuppositions. We start with this presupposition that God made marriage good.

Let's turn to Genesis chapter 1. That is a call to build according to God's design. So, we're going to use this building metaphor to build our outline, and we'll just hit some of the highlights as we go through Genesis 1 and 2, and just, we're

just wanting to recognize here that God made marriage good. When we build our homes, when we build our marriages according to God's design.

So first, we start, this is point number one, if you're taking notes. Point number one, we set the foundation according to design. Set the foundation according to design. The foundation for our marriages, building our marriages, is God's directive intention for marriage. Which you can see in Genesis 1:26 to 28.

Genesis 1:26, "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' And so God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female, he created them. And then God blessed them. And he said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'"

So first we see from that directive, we see God created man and woman to glorify God. Created man and woman to glorify God, united them in marriage to glorify God. So, we can safely say the chief end of marriage, is to glorify God. Say the same thing in the Westminster Confession, the chief end of man, what is man's Chief end? Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. We can say the same thing about marriage. Chief end of marriage is a glorify God.

Here at the beginning, God is revealing our teleology. Teleology is a fancy word for what's the purpose for which it was created. God reveals the purpose for which we and in which a marriage is created. The marital union of two sexually complementary divine image bearers is to bring glory and honor to God, and they do that by being who they are ontologically and then acting out according to their biological and relational design.

They live out their purpose. They live out their purpose, aimed at that chief end to glorify God. Now we're familiar with the attributes of the essence of what it means to be humans created in God's image. We all have a mind, will, affections. We're able

to reason and think. We can embrace our thoughts and affections. We're able to plan according to the purpose of our will. We're able to execute on our will within the bounds of our own power.

We have the capacity as human beings, male and female, for creativity, for love, and loving, for the ability and desire to relate with and commune with God and to commune with one another. That's all true of us. That's all predicated on the fact that we're creating in God's image. John Murray says, "Man was created in the image of God, a self-conscious, free, responsible religious agent. Such identity implies an inherent native, inalienable obligation to love and serve God with all the heart, soul, strength and mind. This God could not but demand and man could not but owe." End quote.

In other words, we have the freedom to choose according to our nature. We are fully free as human beings. We have freedom to choose according to our nature. Just as God has the freedom to choose according to his nature. That's part of being created in his image. And so, like God, our righteous choice is the blessed duty to live for the glory of God. We follow his pattern.

Second, according to that section we just read, God created man and woman uniting them in marriage to represent God, to glorify God first and now to represent God. So, we could say the chief occupation of marriage is to represent God, that's the nature of the work that we're designed by God to do. Again, verse 26, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over," all the creatures, as God exercises his dominion and sovereignty over us, as he uses his superior power, intellect, and authority for the good of those who are inferior, his creatures.

We do the same thing with whatever is entrusted to our care. We've been granted a stewardship of creation which we're to use to show God's care in accordance with his grace. We use our superior powers, gifts, intellects to use the authority God delegated to us by God for the good of others. That practice of using great power, intellect, will, that practice starts in marriage and that intimacy of two marriage partners extends out from the marriage, man and wife to the children, to the family and from the family it extends outward from there to other human beings and it moves outward from there into the entire creation.

So first, we're created to glorify God. Second, we're created to represent God. Third, God created man and woman united them in marriage to perpetuate the image of God. This is one of the greatest joys of marriage, isn't it? To perpetuate God's image in our children. We'll expand on this in a moment, but the first revelation of a sexual union in marriage is Genesis 1:28. The chief end for sexual union is procreation, to be fruitful, to be happy, a, in the fruitfulness, to multiply, to be joyful in that multiplication. I remember counseling a couple. Another church, another time, that professing Christians, both of them.

But I was so dismayed to discover that the man was denying his wife's desire to have children. He had professional goals. He had a lifestyle that he wanted to maintain, activities he wanted to be involved with and having children was not any desire of his. The galling truth is that he believed it was wrong for me or anybody to press his conscience about this, about having kids, about giving himself to his wife. His wife longed for children but without a cooperating attitude in her husband she's not going to have any babies. It's tragic. Sad. Why would anybody do that?

The procreative end of the sexual union points to this beautiful codependency between the man and the woman. It can't be fulfilled apart from that other marriage partner. The co-image bearer equal and yet different, gloriously equal, gloriously different. Procreation mandate shows a glorious complementarity and a mutual dependency. Together, the man and his wife, they participate together in perpetuating and extending the image of God in and through their offspring. More image bearers. More glory to God in spreading his image throughout the Earth. That's the idea. So, we start building our house by digging down, setting that foundation deep according to God's design.

It's a very simple design. The foundation is understanding the end for which we're created, the purpose and end for which marriage exists, the teleology. The chief end of man is to glorify God and the chief end of marriage is to glorify God. So, marriage is about representing God on Earth, and that sexual union is for perpetuating and extending the image of God.

So, with that as a foundation for marriage, we build the marriage house also according to God's design. So secondly, we

not only set the foundation according to God's design, we build the house according to God's design. Number two, build the house according to God's design. This is a structure for building our marriage, is what we can refer to as God's formative organization of marriage. His formative organization of marriage. This is the way God organized the marriage with each partner having a unique and specific role, complementing one another not overstepping, but actually being true complements to one another.

This is what sets the pattern for forming each individual, according to God's design for him as a male person, according to God's design for her as a female person. This provides the formation for the offspring of that male female union, and by extension for the whole of society as well. Everybody knows what a male is to be, and everybody knows what a female is to be because they watch it pattern before them in marriage.

In Genesis 2, we see two basic patterns of formative organization, patterns of authority and patterns of intimacy. It's next week that we're going to get into the second one

there, pattern of intimacy. But for today it'll be patterns of authority. But the practice of both of these patterns of authority and intimacy, practicing these patterns is what builds the marriage for healthy formation, for maturity, for fruitfulness, and increasing joy.

So first, let's talk about the pattern of authority. It's evident in how God created Adam and then introduced him into the world. Paul notices this in 1 Timothy chapter 2, when he forbids women to be elders and teachers in the church. He says in 1 Timothy 2:12 and following "I do not permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man; rather, she used to remain quiet." He's talking about the local church and he says "for," here's the reason is because, "Adam was formed first," and, "then Eve."

Paul sees a pattern in how God created Adam, creating him first and then creating Eve. Let's look at this pattern in Genesis chapter 2, starting in verse 5. We see that God created Adam first. There's a reason for this. "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, and a mist was going up from the land was watering the whole face of the ground-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."

We don't have any more detail than that, so we'll resist speculation, but the language pictures God getting down into the dirt like a potter who forms the clay using his hands, using his skill, directed by his will and his creativity, and for his own pleasure, for his own joy God forms this dirt into a man. The language is picturing God as a, almost like an artist, like the potter forming the clay.

There's, there's this language pictures tenderness, doesn't it? The lips breathing into this lifeless form the, the breath of life. There's a creativity, there's a design, there's a, there's an intimacy implied there, a tenderness. When you come to verse 22, you can see in chapter 2, that God performed the first

surgery. He takes from the already formed man from the dirt to make or fashion the woman from Adam's rib.

It's not worse or better, but it's clearly different. He doesn't form her from the dust of the ground that's already been done. He forms her and fashions her out of already created material, Adam. Key point here is being that Adam was created earlier than Eve. He's about to do a lot of learning apart from his future wife Eve. Being there notice number two, that God showed Adam the environment first.

Verses 8 to 14, notice there, "The Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. Out of the ground the Lord God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil."

Stop there, but you see in verses 10 to 14, God showed Adam the water source of the garden, gives him a geography lesson, he tells him about the resources that are contained in the land.

There's a land there to explore, there's discoveries to be made, there's minerals to mine out of the earth, resources to develop, put into efficient use and by all that discovery and mining and bringing to the surface, there's also assumed here God is showing Adam or pointing to a pattern of studying the natural world.

Understanding its elements, understanding its gifts, categorizing them, putting them, doing science, you could say. Gathering facts from nature, organizing, systematizing and this really sets the pattern for the supernatural world as well. Studying the supernatural world. What we call doing theology. Adam is receiving the tools here for study, for learning. Where's Eve? Not there yet. She's unaware of all this. She's waiting to exist. She's tucked there into Adam side still. This is how God designed it.

Number three, God gave Adam work assignments first. So, we see God created Adam first, he showed him his environment first and then he gave Adam the work assignments first. Verse 15 "the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to work it

and keep it." This gives Adam a place to start, it shows him how to take up that creation mandate, how it is he's going to exercise the dominion of verse 26 chapter 1, verse 28 chapter 1.

Again, Eve isn't there to hear this. Next, we see number four that God gave Adam the command about the trees first, before Eve existed. Verses 16 and 17, "The Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.'"

Particularly vital piece of information, wouldn't you say? Everything is good, everything is yummy, everything is tasty, everything is good for the diet, no problems, a but, but, but, but one. It's gonna kill ya. You gotta know that. Don't pick that fruit. Now we see an element of danger in this perfect world. All that is in the world is not harmless, but there is a danger.

There is a potential for harm. Here we begin to see the reason that Adam is created first. The reason he's first exposed, first warned. Adam is not only to be the head of his wife, the

authority over his wife, he is to be the representative head of the entire human race. Adam is to use his priority of order and position and authority and strength for the purpose of teaching his wife and his teaching is to be driven by loving concern.

A concern for her safety, a concern for her thriving, a concern for her flourishing. Here's a beautiful picture of the kind of discipleship that God provides for Adam, as God has done the same for him. God teaches him, warns him, so he's safe, thriving, and flourishing and Adam is to take that pattern now apply it to his wife as well. Next we see, number five, God created Eve to help Adam. Verse 18, "Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make for him a helper fit for him.'"

This not only reveals the woman's position and role, but it also reveals her incredible usefulness. Men take note, your wife is a good and perfect gift for you. Specifically tailored for you. She is useful, helpful, wise. She's shaped and formed for you. Don't treat her with anything other than the highest regard and honor. She's God's perfect gift to Adam. Eve is created for him.

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Created as a suitable complementary partner in the work that they're assigned to do.

And now with all the background and intention revealed in creating and teaching Adam, we come to the matter of delegated authority. God's delegated authority to Adam and tells him to put it to use. He gave, number six, gave, God gave Adam the authority of naming his fellow creatures and he does this again without Eve present. Verses 19 and 20, "Now out of the ground, the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. Whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. Man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the heavens, to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him."

Among all the animals nothing suitable, for him. Among all the creatures that God made according to his glorious creativity and design and variation, not one of them was suitable for him. Not one of them complemented him, not one of them could correspond and help him do what he's assigned to do. So, after God created

Eve, we can see that Adam used his authority again, for her sake, to serve her; the blessed privilege of naming her as well. Verse 23 "She shall be called woman."

Adam's authority is a delegated authority, but is a very real authority. In God's omniscience, God obviously knew what Adam would name each animal, nothing surprised him, nothing happened outside of God's sovereign decree, but Adam is truly exercising his will. He's making choices according to his nature with his intellect, a pre-fall intellect, creativity fully engaged, and so whatever name Adam gave, it stuck, that was its name.

This isn't playtime or make believe, it's actual real authority. Again, the exercise of authority comes after Adam learned from God, not before. You have to learn how his authority's to be used. So, he's exposed to the reality of the world. He learns about all the opportunities in the world God designed and created. He learns of a potential danger, a very significant danger, death.

He receives his work assignment. He knows what he's supposed to do, he knows who, how he's supposed to exercise that dominion, how he's supposed to do it in love and care and affection. And after receiving this fundamental lesson about how to use authority, Adam exercised his authority. In the spirit that God intended; as delegated for loving and serving others, and in the first instance in loving and serving his own wife.

All of this reveals the fundamental pattern of authority that God provided in the structure for the house, in the structure for marriage. God created humanity as a distinct gender binary, "male and female he created them" and each one of them created in his image, each one equal before God, and yet distinct by God's design. Biology reveals ontology, and it's a distinction that God created for our good.

Everything else that's being imagined today, LGBTQ plus plus plus plus, Q, R, S, T whatever. It's just foolish fantasy, isn't it? It's just playing make believe from start to finish, it's total imagination, but really, it's a terrifying delusion that people are caught up in and it's a total nightmare, total

nightmare. In the relationship of the male female binary in marriage, male female, God established Adam's role as the authority and Eve's role as the helpmeet and God assigned Adam the role of loving head, loving authority over his wife.

He's there to exercise a beneficent authority that God modeled for him first; he's to pass that on to her. God assigned Eve the role of a suitable helper, a submissive partner, a wise counselor. This is no oppressor oppressed arrangement. This is not the powerful victimizing the powerless. God designed this institution for our good, for our blessing, and to say anything otherwise about what God designed, created, instituted, is a satanic lie.

It's intended to turn men against women and women against men. It's there to disrupt the harmony and destroy the unity and shred civilization, starting in the home. As Eve's leader, Adam is her authority, he's a knowledgeable guide, he's a competent teacher, and all of his ministry to her is motivated by a self-sacrificial love. As Adam's helpmeet, Eve is the follower, she's

the capable helper. She loves her husband who teaches her things.

She's wed together in her heart with him and he with her. She enables his work, her act of submission, wise followership, helps the two of them together to fulfill that creation mandate, to exercise dominion. That's the pattern of authority that reveals God's formative organization of marriage. Embracing, practicing, maturing in these complementary roles has a formative power on each of us as individuals, doesn't it?

The institution itself is formed and shaped by our learning this. It's protected, it's guarded, and it's for all of our posterity as well, of our children learn from watching us. Well, after setting the foundation, building the house, there's one more point in the outline that we'll get to next time to talk about. How do we enjoy the house? That's the good stuff. So, you're going to want to be here next week. Talk about that.

Let's pray, our father we thank you so much for your wisdom, goodness, all expressed in your perfect design. How you've

created things, how you've created us. We thank you so much for your loving kindness and your tender-hearted care in providing for us and even in protecting us. Giving Adam that warning about that one tree of which he must not eat. But that's in the context of a wide variety and a plentiful bounty of goodness to enjoy in all the trees of the garden.

We thank you so much father for what's revealed. Just the brief things we could touch on today in Genesis 1 and 2. We thank you so much for the pattern of authority and instruction. There's so much for us to put into practice even just from this initial investigation into your word, but we do pray for your help and your grace as we pursue this in our own marriages and families.

We pray that you would bless us with powerful outpouring of your spirit that we might do the word that you've revealed. That we might rejoice in the practice of our marriages, practice of intimacy, practice of loving one another. We ask this for your glory Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, by the power of your Holy Spirit, amen.