They Shall Become One Flesh
Sermon Notes
11-15-2026

- **Series:** Marriage
- **Text Scripture:** Genesis 2:24
- Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

Genesis 2:24 verse speaks of leaving, holding fast, and becoming one flesh.
Central message: Genesis 2:24 describes marriage through three connected actions—leaving father and mother, holding fast to one's wife, and becoming one flesh. Our goal is to determine what becoming one flesh means and why it matters to God.

In Genesis 2:24, God establishes who should be part of a marriage union. The Hebrew terms are **ish** for "man" and **ishshah** for "woman." Matthew 19:4–5 connects this teaching to creation. Jesus asks, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female."

Leave:

The verse begins with leaving father and mother. In this passage, we understand that leaving as establishing a new primary family relationship, not ceasing to love or honor parents. This union becomes the primary relationship for the husband and wife. This passage calls for the husband and wife to create a new union which includes setting up a new household of their own.

Hold fast:

The next movement is holding fast. Some bible translations use the word cleave in-lieu of hold fast. Hold fast takes on the meaning of being glued or cemented together.
When we take two pieces of wood and glue them together the bond becomes so tight that when we attempt to pull the pieces apart, the fibers in the wood split. The Hebrew word speaks of being joined together, commitment, faithfulness, and remaining united.

Become one flesh:

Within the marriage setting of this verse, we understand one flesh as an embodied union that includes many components. It is more than sharing a house together. It

invites us to consider a relationship in which another person's well-being becomes part of our own responsibility.

Becoming "one flesh" calls a husband and wife to work as a team in accomplishing God's will for their family. This shared life includes sexual intimacy between husband and wife only (1 Corinthians 7:1–5); sexual relations outside the marriage are sinful acts. It also includes shared responsibilities for the household. First Timothy 5:14 calls on women to manage the household well. Proverbs 31:27 calls on the woman to oversee her household, provide for her family's needs, work diligently, exercise good judgment, and take responsibility for her family's welfare. Husbands also bear responsibilities for the family's care and spiritual direction: fathers are to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4); husbands are to exercise godly leadership (Ephesians 5:23), provide for their household's physical needs (1 Timothy 5:8), and provide spiritual leadership (Genesis 18:19).

The husband and wife should share financial decisions, resources, and build a life together.

What one flesh does not mean:

- **Not the loss of individuality.** Becoming one flesh does not erase the distinct person each spouse brings to the marriage. God has created each person with a distinct personality, spiritual gifts, likes, and dislikes. First Corinthians 12 describes different gifts and their usefulness in God's kingdom. Husband and wife bring those differences into a shared life; unity does not require them to become identical.
- **There will never be problems.** Chapters 1 and 2 in Genesis gives us a view of God's perfect plan for humanity. Adam and Eve did not only interact as God planed them too with each other, they also were in perfect fellowship with God. Unfortunately disobedience and sin entered, and we are now living in a world represented in chapters 3 and 4.
- **Not merely physical intimacy.** The verse places becoming one flesh alongside leaving and holding fast; physical closeness must not be detached from the relationship's responsibilities.
- **Not permission for control or abuse.** Becoming one flesh gives neither spouse permission to control or abuse the other. The comparison between Christ and the church and the marriage relationship points in the opposite direction: toward love and respect. Ephesians 5:33 says, "However let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband." Neither the call to unity nor the call to respect excuses abusive behavior.

Why this union matters to God?

This union was God's plan. Man did not decide that this would be a good action to take. God is the one that said, "it is not good that man should be alone."
The four passages listed below bring this teaching into view: Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:5, Mark 10:7–9, and Ephesians 5:31–33. Reading them together helps us consider the importance of this union and why it matters to God.

In Ephesians 5:32, Paul says, "This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church." In the New Testament, "mystery" identifies some hidden reality in the past and reviled in the New Testament. Marriage is a sacred reflection of the magnificent mystery of the union between Christ and his church. Completely unknown until the New Testament.

love calls us beyond self-interest.

A shared life gives us repeated opportunities to practice patience, generosity, humility, and service. Paul clearly explains this in 1st Corinthians 13:4-8; Love is patient and kind: does not envy or boast; It is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; It is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.