Different By Design — Delivery Transcript

Genesis 2:18–23 (ESV) · Wes Terry · Sunday, February 12, 2023 · *In The Beginning*

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All right, great job by our team leading us in worship this morning. They do a great job week in and week out. And if you have your Bible, we're going to be in Genesis chapter 2, so you can go ahead and turn there. And it really is great to see all of you and those of you who are visiting with us today, if you came in after the welcome, thank you for being here as well. We have—you want to do a little dance? Yeah. That was awkward. I'm sorry I did that.

Anyway, we've been doing the book of Genesis as a church. We preached through books of the Bible at Broadview, so we just finished the book of Revelation last year and now we're starting over, no I'm kidding, we didn't go through the whole Bible, but we're starting at the beginning of the Bible in Genesis, and I'm really not sure we're going to preach through the whole book of Genesis yet, but we are for sure doing the first three chapters because it answers some of the most foundational questions of life that every person asks, whether you're a Christian, atheist, agnostic, Hindu, Muslim, Jew, doesn't matter.

We all ask questions like, why am I here? How did I get here? What is here? When did it happen? What is man? What is woman? What is marriage? What's wrong with me? What's wrong with her? How do we fix it? These kinds of questions all of us ask either explicitly or implicitly. And culture and different religions and all different kinds of people are giving different answers to these questions. Some of the answers are okay, some of the answers are absolutely terrible, but the answers that Genesis gives are the best answers and the truest answers because I believe they come from God Himself.

We believe that the Scriptures are inspired by God, that they are true and helpful and praiseworthy, or they're—they're like effective in building up our lives so that when we align

our lives underneath the Scripture we actually put ourselves in a position to flourish as human beings. And so we've been working our way through. We've seen God's creation of the earth and the Sabbath and paradise and all these issues that Genesis brings up. Today though, we're getting to that point in the book of Genesis, *When a Man Loves a Woman* and the rest of the story, you know, you have to have that talk with your parents, but it really is kind of a point in the book of Genesis where we're dealing in adult themes because we're dealing with the creation of man and woman and the differences between men and women.

And so if you're here and you're six or seven years old I hope you're with your mom and your dad. And we're not going to be risque or anything like that, but we are going to take what God's Word has to say and present it. And I just need to say up front that if there were ever a conflict between what Scripture says and what culture says, this is the issue. We are so far apart from what our culture's vision for human sexuality is and what scripture says the vision for human sexuality is.

And there'll probably be people right here in this room this morning who get very upset with me because they're really upset with the scripture and they'll say things like, "You're bigoted, and you're narrow-minded, and how dare you." And I would just want to challenge you, all I just want to say up front, all I'm trying to do as a preacher and a pastor is represent what I think the scripture is saying. And so if you think I did that wrong, if you think that I got the Bible wrong, I'm one of those type of people.

I love to talk about that kind of stuff. I'm very open to your criticisms and if you want to come talk to me or email me or yell at me, whatever you want to do, that's absolutely fine. I'd welcome that. But if your problem isn't really with what I said, that I just kind of represented what Scripture said, but that your ultimate problem is with the Scripture itself, then I want to challenge you to really think about why that is. Especially if you're someone you consider yourself to be a Christian and you believe that the Bible is, if not completely true, at least mostly true, and it is special and it records the life of Jesus.

And if that's kind of your perspective and you come to the Bible for wisdom and truth on a whole variety of issues, why is it the second you come to an issue where you begin to disagree with the Bible because your culture disagrees with the Bible that all of a sudden you say, "That can't be true. That's backwater, that's dated, that's not for today. That's just kind of restricted to way back then." I think implicit in that kind of assumption is this conviction that your God is not the God of the Bible.

It's not God you agree with. When you agree with God on all these other issues, it's not really God you agree with, it's really yourself that you agree with. You've kind of made a God in your own image. The way you know that you believe in the genuine God of the Bible is that when he contradicts you, you kind of align yourself with his vision instead of changing his

definition to fit your agenda. Who are we to think that there could be a true God who created heaven and earth and that that God might reveal himself in a book called the Bible.

If that's true, which I think there are good reasons to say that it is, who are we to think that that God would always agree with us? Of course he would not agree with us. If he's really God and we're really not, there have to be times where he pushes back and he says, "No, not quite. No, no, not there. Actually, the culture gets it wrong on this issue." And so what I want to encourage us to do is have an open mind this morning and approach this issue, which is indeed divisive because of what our culture believes and actually see why God designed us the way that He did.

So that's Genesis 2. We're going to be in verses 18 and following. And before we read the text, just by way of context, a lot of people get tripped up in Genesis 2 because they think it's a contradiction with Genesis 1. Genesis 1 records six days of creation, it takes God's whole creation of everything and presents it in terms of these six days. And then you get to Genesis two and it's there are no numbers, there are no days, and it kind of hops around back and forth and looks like it contradicts Genesis one.

That only contradicts Genesis 1 if you try to read it as a second creation narrative. Really, what you should think of Genesis 2 as doing is filling in the gaps that Genesis 1 left. Genesis 1 was broad stroke, very general purpose of God for creation and for mankind. And now here what Genesis 2 is doing is it's coming in and it's acting like a commentary. And it's filling in the gaps, and it's zooming in the camera, and it's really zooming in on one particular day of creation, which is day six, and one particular element on day six, which is the creation of man and woman.

So Genesis 2 is really giving God's specific design for how men and women are supposed to partner together in bringing about God's design. You know that because Genesis 1 concludes with God saw everything that he had made and it was good. But when you get to our text, it opens with the phrase, it was not good that man should be alone. And so something had to happen between those two things. We know Genesis 2 can't follow after Genesis 1, because Genesis 1 closes with it was very good. So really what we're looking at this morning needs to go before it was very good, before God completes the creation, and we see in Genesis 2 how God completes it: by creating a woman to come alongside of the man and them together fulfill what God called them to do.

So we're going to answer two questions. Why did God create women? What is God's purpose in creating women? And then what are the differences between men and women and why do they matter? So let's start Genesis chapter 2, starting in verse 18. "Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone;'" and so "'I will make him a helper fit for him.' Now out of the ground the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and" he "brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever

the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him."

And so Genesis 2:18 closes where Genesis 2:18 begins, and it's this phrase, it's not good that man's alone, and so we need to make a helper that's fit for him. And so the simple answer for why God created women is because it wasn't good for men to be alone. And all the men said, "Amen." And all the women said, "Yeah, you were in pretty pitiful shape, you know, before I came along." It's not good for man to be alone. Now I want to be careful. It's not that Adam himself was incomplete.

We know this because Jesus was single the entirety of his life, and no one would say that Jesus was incomplete because he wasn't married, and many of you in this room are single. And I'm not suggesting that you're somehow incomplete as a human being because you don't have a woman in your life or a spouse in your life. Think not so specific, not so narrow, just broad stroke. If Adam was the only person who ever existed, he's all alone on the earth. God's creation cannot be complete and God's mandate cannot be fulfilled because there needs to be another person with whom Adam can partner to be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it.

And so the creation itself was incomplete. It was not good that man would be alone. So that's why God created woman to complete the creation. You remember in Genesis 1:26 and 27, it says that God made man in his own image. In the image of God, He created them, male and female He created them. And so there was this pairing that needed to take place. And Genesis 2 is zooming in on that time period where no pairing existed. God is not a me. God is a us, right? Father, Son, Holy Spirit.

And we, if we're made in God's image, we're made to be like him and share his attributes in many ways, then we are designed for community. It's core to who we are. We were not meant to live in isolation. Doesn't mean you need a—it doesn't mean you need to be married. Doesn't mean you have to have a spouse. It just means for you to flourish as a human being, you need to be in community. There need to be other people with whom you are engaged and have friendships with so that you can really embody and fulfill God's image in you.

So that the creation was incomplete and the mandate was uncompleted. Now what's the mandate? The mandate's Genesis 1:28, where God says, be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it, or have dominion over the earth. And really what Adam is doing in Genesis 2:18 is he's fulfilling this job description where he's having dominion over the earth and the animals are coming up beside of him and God's parading the animals before him and he's telling Adam, okay, job. And so some people suggest that God's bringing the animals before Adam kind of like a hot or not app, and he's like, "Nope. Nope. Yeah. Not interested."

That's not—I don't think that's what's happening. I don't think some kind of temptation to bestiality. That's really gross. Rather, I think what's happening is God's bringing the animals before Adam and He's saying, "Huh, the lion has a lioness, and the leopard has a leopardess, and the buck has the doe, and the rooster has the hen. And I'm running out of different names for different animals. But basically every male has a counterpart with whom they can procreate and recreate and cultivate and be what they are meant to be. But I don't have that person. There's no person for me."

And God sees that and says, "That's not good. It's not good for man to be alone, so I'm going to create a helper who can come alongside of him." If you're taking notes: man's, or Adam's, mandate over the creation required a helper with whom he could procreate, recreate, and cultivate creation alongside him. Doesn't mean every man needs a woman. Doesn't mean every woman needs to be married to a man. It just means God's general purpose in creation required a man and a woman, that the building block of all civilization is the family built on a man and a woman in marriage, having children.

And from that little house, creating other little houses and other little mini civilizations until you get bigger and bigger and bigger and you have a society that is flourishing according to God's original design. Man could not do that alone, and so God created a woman to come alongside of him to procreate, recreate, and cultivate creation with him. So how did he do it? Well, Genesis 2:21 says "the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept" he "took one of his ribs and" he "closed" it "up" in "its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man."

And then the man said, "At last my love has come along, and my heart has—" no, he didn't say that. He 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." And a lot of people say, "Well, did it literally happen this way? Did they literally take a rib?" And I think actually men do have one less rib than women.[1] Is this the case? I've always heard that's a myth. Well, I don't know if it literally happened that way or not.

If you take it as literal face value and interpret it literally, then it did literally happen. Some people see Genesis as kind of a poetic song, a way of describing in a poetic way God's creation of man and woman. So maybe it didn't literally happen that way. But he made women alongside of man, there was a special creation of God, and from the very beginning to the very end, the thing that sticks out to me is that it was an act of God's sovereign, amazing grace. God takes the initiative, God sees the problem, he says it's not good, he actually tells Adam to go to sleep.

All Adam has to do is take a nap. And while he's sleeping, God does the work. He takes the rib, he fashions the woman, and then after he fashions the woman, God is the one who brings her to the man from beginning to end. At every step along the way, God's creation of

Eve is an act of undeserved grace and what a reminder for us, especially if you're single and you're looking for God to do something for you. It doesn't mean you shouldn't take initiative. It doesn't mean you shouldn't go, you know, be who you want someone to marry or be the person you're looking for is looking for.

Certainly it takes initiative, but at the end of the day, it's really God's sovereign plan and bringing those things to fruition in your life and just trusting Him and accepting who he brings you as an act of his grace. Notice also it was taken from his rib. Not only is Eve's creation a gift of grace, she's also taken from Adam's side. That's important because Adam says, "She's bone of my bone. She's flesh of my flesh." I think what that's getting at is that there's something about Eve that is unique. "No other animal in creation does it for me like she does it for me. I'm not attracted—I don't desire anything else or anyone else in creation like I desire Eve, because she is like me and unlike me in very important ways. She's kind of like me, but with some very acceptable differences that I'm kind of into."

That kind of bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, that's what that's getting at. And it says that Eve is a helper fit for him. And that's really the important phrase. There is a quote by—go back just a little bit—by Matthew Henry that I really love that talks about this coming out of Adam's side and how she was uniquely fashioned as a helper fit for him. He says that woman is not taken "from man's head to top him, nor from his feet to be trampled on by him," but rather she is taken "from man's side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected by him, and" from "under his heart to be beloved by him."

That I think is a picture of what's actually going on in Genesis 2. Adam is seeing in Eve someone who is equal to me, someone who is kind of a co-heir with me, made in God's image just like I am. And yet she's different from me. She's attractive to me. I want to protect this thing. I want to love this person. I said thing. I want to protect this person. I want to love this person. All of that's wrapped up in this imagery being taken from the side. Now when it comes to this phrase a helper fit for him, that's where sometimes we lose people because they read the word helper and they kind of think, "Oh, number one helper," you know, you got to get the word.

That's kind of like this denigrating word that sometimes makes it as if women are some kind of like second-class citizens, or, you know, "Attaboy, you're doing good," kind of like this kind of menial type of thing. That is not what the word helper actually means though in the context. You got to remember when you read the scripture you don't want to impose your 21st century definitions of words and assumptions about context and about words onto the text. Rather, you want to let the text speak for itself. And when you do that, you've got to ask questions like, well, who wrote the book of Genesis?

And the answer to that question is Moses wrote the book of Genesis. And when did Moses write the book of Genesis? Well, he wrote it after the Israelites were freed from slavery to

Pharaoh in Egypt and they had kind of gone through the wilderness and they're entering the promised land, and Moses is chronicling from creation all the way to where they are today God's faithfulness and his sovereign activity. And he actually uses the word—*ezer* is the Hebrew word—several other times to help us kind of fill out what the word helper actually means.

And so when you read what does it mean in Genesis 2, you also need to answer that with what it means in these other places because the word is used by the same author in different places to mean the same thing. One example is Moses' children in Exodus 18. He actually names one of his children *ezer*, helper. He says the name of the child was "Eliezer (for he said"—Moses said—""The God of my father was my" *ezer*, was my "help, and" he "delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh'"). So this idea that God Himself is a helper is also used in Psalm 121, verses 1 and 2.

He says, "I lift" my "eyes to the hills." Where does my *ezer*—that's the word; woman was a helper fit for Adam—where does "my help come" from? "My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth." So the idea is that this word helper means someone who gives strength that you don't have on your own, someone who enables you to do things you cannot do yourself. Psalm 46:1 says the same thing: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." In other words, I was in trouble. I was a goner.

I could not save myself and God came alongside and supplied me with strength that I did not have on my own. And he enabled me to do what I could not do for myself. And so that's why the women were made for men. They were made specifically, Eve was made for Adam. And God's purpose in creating all women was so that they might strengthen men in ways that they could not strengthen themselves. And so that they would enable men to do what they could not do on their own. In that way, mankind is insufficient to fulfill the task without God creating a helper who could come alongside of him and do things that he could not.

There really are things that men cannot do that women can, and God made them so that they might do those things and partner with men to fulfill the creation mandate. And all the women are looking at their husbands and saying, "That's right, there are some things you cannot do." And then if you're an honest man, you would say there's some things that she's just better at than I am, and I would not—we would not be here today. We would not be what we are today without my wife or my spouse or my sister or my mom, whatever the case may be, doing what only she could have done.

This is what Moses is doing. He's saying to every man and every father and every son and every uncle, "Women are not a second-class citizen. Women are not kind of take them or leave them. They are absolutely central. They are integral to my purpose for creation. And so you need to treasure them and cherish them and celebrate that femininity for what it actually is." That's the word helper. And then the word *fit* is the Hebrew word *neged*, or

neged, and it means it's actually a kind of a two-fold term. It has one sense of the term is that it is before the other.

So it's in the view of the other person. So there's this equality and sameness and correspondence with but the other idea wrapped up in the word is this idea of distinction or difference or complementarity. So as I joked earlier, Adam is saying that she's like me. She's —you know, she's got hands and feet and face and symmetry, but she's also unlike me, with some very acceptable differences. And so there's sameness and difference. There's correspondence, but also complementarity. And that's what this word fit for him actually means. If you're taking notes, there's an important—Eve is equal with and distinct from Adam at the same time, making her uniquely fit to complement him in important ways.

And so mankind, summary statement, was built for community. We were not meant to live in isolation, and God has made the biological sexes different by design. It is his intention to create man and women different so that women could do for man what they could not do for themselves and they could complement or supplement one another in unique, profound ways. This idea is hated by our culture. This part probably, maybe not all that controversial, being built for community. But this idea absolutely is. To say that men and women are distinct and different used to not be a very controversial statement.

These days it can get you in a lot of trouble. The culture has taken God's design for human sexuality and they've turned it upside down and inside out. They've taken this idea that there are inherently different roles and responsibilities that men and women have, and they've said that's anathema, that's a terrible backwater sexist thing to say. And there's nothing a man can do that a woman can't do equally as good. And we need to destroy or remove any kind of assumptions or restrictions that prevent women from participating in things that they should be able to do just because men do them.

Just because if a man can do it, then a woman can do it just the same. That's where culture's coming from and scripture is saying, actually that's not true. And I've made it different by design so that they might complement one another instead of just overlaying one another. They are equal in dignity and value and worth, spiritually the same, but designed different to complement one another in profound ways. Now, you don't have to be a Christian to believe this, obviously. You can believe this because that's what the Bible says. You can also believe it because of what you see in the world.

It's not a profound leap of faith. Whether you look in God's word or whether you look at God's world, the differences between men and women are absolutely obvious. And I know our culture is trying to tear those obvious differences away. But you got to do a lot of work to do that. Our physical bodies, I don't want to be too crass, but just men have a certain kind of physical structure biologically. The symbol for mankind even has a little cross. Wait, how does a man's symbol go? Is it the arrow pointing forward?

It's out. All right, it's out. Something's sticking out. Whereas the symbol for women is not. It's more receptive. It's internal. It's receiving. Well that's getting at the biological, physical differences between men and women. Our DNA is different. If you look at the genome of a man, it's an XY chromosome. You look at a female and it is an—it's XX. I was kind of doing some research on this and read one paper that said there are 6,500 genetic differences between men and women. Six thousand five hundred. So you can give women testosterone and you can chemically castrate a man and you can try to use surgeries and medications to strip away a lot of the external things, but you cannot change that biological design: at the genetic molecular structure, 6,500 ways that men are not women and women are not men.

Our DNA is different, our bodies are different, our blood is different. Men have more red blood cells than women do. But women have more water in their blood than men do. In the short term, a man needs less sleep than a woman. And a man, generally speaking, can exercise longer than the average woman, although I know some women who can exercise way longer than some men. But generally speaking on the pendulum, most men can exercise longer than most women generally because of how they're wired biologically, because of the red blood cell count, because of the way they're structured.

In the short term, man may have an edge on that way, but in the long term, the average woman lives nearly six years longer than the average man.[2] So even though you may need less sleep and can work out longer, you're going to die, bucko, and your wife's going to outlive you. Our brains are different. I found this interesting, men. Men have a bigger brain than women. All right? It's science. But don't let that go to your head, guys, because women have more gray matter in their brains, which is where the thinking actually happens.

And so you may have a bigger brain. But don't mean you're smarter. In fact, in many cases you are not. It's why young girls develop so much faster relationally and socially than most little boys. They're still playing with their trains and girls are building little families in their room. The brains are different. Men are vertical. They're wired vertically. They're very compartmentalized. Women are wired more horizontally. They're more integrated. This is why women, generally speaking, are able to like juggle a thousand things at the same time and keeping everything together and what's happened at breakfast is still on the radar during, you know, going to bedtime.

And men, you ask 'em, "What are you thinking about?" and they'll say, "Nothing." That's because they're thinking about nothing because they're not tied in with everything else. They're in that nothing lane and they're happy in that lane. This is also why men, generally speaking, are much more compartmentalized. And we have our little boxes and we keep them nice and neat and we don't let them bleed in between. That's not so much the case with most women. It's much more integrated. You've heard the phrase, "Men are from Mars and women are from Venus."

That's not true. They're both from earth. You read it right here in Genesis. But there are differences in our brains where women can like learn languages better than men, like learning Greek, Hebrew, Latin, and it's because of the way your brain is wired. Men on the other hand generally have a better long-term memory than women. Because there's not so many roadblocks getting in the way of remembering things. It's just… So don't get in an argument with your husband. He'll say, "Well, 30 years ago you said, in this tone of voice, with these particular vocabulary words…"

Hopefully you're not married to that guy, but it's a difference between men and women. The differences, here's what's important. The differences are good. They are by design. We should embrace them. We should celebrate them. We should not denigrate them or ignore them or pretend like they do not exist. We do that to our own demise. And yet that's exactly what our culture has done. And it hasn't done it overnight. There have been movements and ideologies from very, very long ago that have kind of worked their way into our culture and now we're kind of—the chickens have come home to roost.

I got to be careful what I say here, but the whole feminist movement, you've had how many waves of feminism now? Three waves. You had the first wave with, like, Margaret Sanger and that other lady and they had some you know some valid insights. Not everything in the feminist movement was bad and wrong. The idea that women weren't allowed to vote, that's nonsense. The idea that kind of women need to be on the outskirts of the important discussions, absolute nonsense, but you don't need feminism to say that. Genesis makes that very plain.

Women can do things men cannot do. "That's why I made you a woman." Bring her in. Let her in on the important discussions. Let her in on the leadership. Let her in on those big important things because she has a perspective you do not have that you need in order to cultivate and have dominion and make the best out of your creation and make the best out of the world and out of your home. So the critique that feminism made at that level, accurate, true, but not unique to feminism, the Bible makes the same critique.

But what is in feminism that is not helpful? Especially in the second and third waves of feminism and the critical theory that undergirds modern-day feminism, which basically sees everything through the lens of power. And let's take the powerful people and let's destruct them and let's tear away their power and let's embrace it for ourselves and get rid of all this kind of heteronormativity and all of that. That whole paradigm and let's liberate ourselves. What ends up happening with that kind of philosophy is they separate women from their bodies. There is nothing unique about femininity.

There is nothing biologically attached to femaleness. It's all about the mind. And when you ignore the body and it's only about what's going on up here, that's an ancient heresy known as Gnosticism. And we embrace that philosophy to our own demise and to the demise of the

next generation. Women have a body that is central to their femininity and it should be embraced and cherished and celebrated, not ignored and integrated. But we've adopted this worldview into our culture and now you've got biological men who are ruining women's sports because men are wired different biologically.

And you can grade on the curve, you can take the hormones and do all that, but it doesn't erase the genomes. It doesn't undo how God made you to be. It's not been good for women, the whole bathroom thing of biological men going into women's restrooms. It has disrupted what I believe is an original design by God. Now does this mean that people don't have gender dysphoria? Absolutely not. There are people who have true, genuine gender dysphoria, but that is kind of a breaking away of what God's original design was in Genesis.

It should be acknowledged. Those people should be treated with dignity and respect, but you cannot undo the design just because of special cases that violate or get away from the design. Am I saying that there is no spectrum, that some men are very female-ish and some females are very man-like? Obviously that's true. There is a spectrum, but there can only be a spectrum if there's two poles, and the two poles must exist. And when you tear the poles down and say they don't matter and they're not really there, you do that to our own demise.

Our culture will crumble because we're saying what God has said is not really there. It's not really true. There are no differences. And if we reject that, we reject the good gift that God originally gave in creating men and women different. Modern-day feminism and the critical theory that undergirds it. It's a blatant and destructive attack on God's design for human sexuality. It's a foolish attempt to separate women from their bodies and to sever biological sex from gender and it ignores and denigrates our divinely designed differences to the detriment of our culture and the destruction of the next generation.

And it'd be one thing if it was just the culture that was kind of doing that. But it's not just the culture, it's the church as well. The church, Christians have imbibed the worldview of the culture on this issue. Even evangelicals, even the people who were supposed to believe the Bible and preach the gospel and take God's word seriously, even they are beginning to distance themselves and question and deconstruct doctrines that have historically been unquestioned. Specifically, doctrines around God's design for men and women. Are they equal in value and dignity?

Yes, absolutely, but there are some who are saying there is no difference in roles and responsibilities. And I think if you adopt that view, you basically have to make certain scriptures say the opposite of what they actually say. And yet it is a rapidly growing theological position in even conservative evangelical churches. Now that's not to say you should believe something just because it's always been believed. Obviously, sometimes people believe things that are not true. Just for the sake of tradition, but it is to say if you're

going to tear down those traditional beliefs, you need to do so carefully because they were probably believed for a reason.

Our theological statement as a Southern Baptist church, we have the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 as kind of the document that helps us partner together and work with other churches that are like-minded. And the BFM defines some of the differences between men and women in their statement on the family. I want to read that to you to help you kind of get at this debate that Christians are having and where I think Christians are compromising. It says that "the husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people."

So God made them different by design so that he could display that relationship that he has with his people. So what's the husband supposed to do? He's supposed to love his wife as Christ loved the church, self-sacrificing, denying yourself, dying to self, loving your wife, that's what you're supposed to do as a man. "He has the God-given"—notice this word —"responsibility to provide for," "protect, and" "lead his family." And a wife has a responsibility "to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ."

In other words, God made marriage to display his relationship to his people, it's displaying the gospel. So just as the church submits to Christ and Christ dies for the church, so also every husband and every wife interacting with one another in that same way. "She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation." So as you can see from this statement, this is what, in the debate, is called complementarianism.

The view is that men and women are equal, spiritually equal, both made in God's image. Men are not more gifted than women in any kind of way, but men are uniquely responsible to serve as the head. It's the Greek word *kephalē*. It's used in Ephesians 5, it's used in several other passages. And all it means is that men are responsible for the spiritual flourishing of their family. When I first became pastor, there was a deacon who came up to me and said, "I'm going to get a sign and put it on your desk that says 'The buck stops somewhere,' and I'm going to put it there because the buck stops with you."

It doesn't mean I do everything in the church. It doesn't mean I'm responsible for everything in the church. It just means if something goes wrong, somebody's got to be accountable, and that ownership ultimately lands on my desk because I'm the one who's the head. I'm the head pastor, the lead pastor. I'm the one responsible for the flourishing. Doesn't mean that I'm more gifted or anything like that. It just means I carry the weight. And what scripture teaches, I believe, clearly, is that men, God has designed men to carry that weight in the home and in the church.

Men and women are equal in value and dignity and worth, but they are different in their roles and responsibilities. There's another view, it's called egalitarianism, that says yes, we're equal, dignity, value, worth, and image. But there is no difference in roles and responsibilities, and just because a man does it doesn't mean a woman can't. And I agree in a way that giftings, men can be just as gifted as women and women can be more gifted as leaders, even as preachers, than some men are, but there is a unique responsibility that God has given to men to oversee the spiritual flourishing for their families.

This is tied up in that word headship. I want to give you a definition for headship that I think is pretty good by Ray Ortlund Jr. He says, "In the partnership of two spiritually equal human beings, man and woman, the man bears the primary"—notice the word *primary*, not exclusive, not the only, but the primary—"responsibility to lead the partnership in a God-glorifying direction." And you'll see this in Genesis 1, 2, and 3. I'll show you in just a minute. This concept that men are to be the head of their homes is as plain as day.

Adam is given the moral command. Adam is given the responsibility before Eve is brought into the picture. Adam is made first. When they sin against God and the Lord rebukes Adam, he basically rebukes him for not leading his family: "You just stood there and allowed Eve to sin against God. You were the one responsible for helping lead your family to glorify God, and you abdicated your leadership responsibility." The phrase helper, I think, points to male headship. The fact that Eve was made from Adam, not Adam from Eve. Paul appeals to this in 1 Corinthians 11:8 and 9.

It is established in creation. God's original design before the fall is male headship, women coming alongside of men as a helpmate and complementary as they together fulfill God's will to have dominion, they do so with complementary roles and responsibilities. The other way I think you see it in creation is the fall. When they sin against God, the tempter comes, he says, "Did God really say…? Just go ahead and eat the fruit. It's no big deal." Eve eats the fruit. Adam is standing right beside her when she does it, and God curses the ground and gives consequences for their sin.

And notice where the consequences land. Genesis 3:16, to the woman, her consequences hit the primary domain of her calling, which is rearing children and nurturing them. "And I'm going to," he says, "multiply your pain in childbearing. In pain you're going to bring forth children. Your desire will be contrary to your husband." So you're supposed to work together complementary, to together fulfill the creation mandate. Now you're going to fight each other and be against one another and he's going to dominate you or rule over you and he's not going to be a servant leader.

He's going to be unchristian and unkind. To the man, the primary domain is affected with the curse on the ground. He says, "Because you" have "listened to the voice of your wife"—in other words, you didn't lead. You weren't doing what you're supposed to do, "And" you've

"eaten of the tree of which I commanded you," "You shall not eat" of "it." Here's what's going to happen: the ground's going to be cursed because of you. You're supposed to protect and provide, and now you're going to do that through the sweat of your brow.

"In pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return." So the primary domain of the woman is affected because of sin, and the primary domain of the man is affected because of sin. But implicit in those consequences is the design that God has made man to be the head and women to come alongside underneath him and together cultivate the home and bring God's mission forward in the life of the church.

Now I'm not saying that's their only domain, obviously. I'm not saying women should never work outside the home, obviously. I'm not saying men should be the only breadwinners. I'm not saying any of that. All I'm saying is the primary domain. If you are a woman, you should know this about yourself. When you begin to have children, something turns on in your body, in your soul, where you say, "I want to—I want to cultivate these kids. I want to bring them up. I want to make this home a safe place that will maximize their potential."

That's hardwired into your soul. That's how God made you to be. So that means if you're going to work outside the home, if you're going to do these different things, your orientation for why you're doing those things will always be to cultivate that. And then if you're not married, you're a single woman, that will look a little bit different on the particulars, but at the end of the day, that yearning and desire will be there and vice versa for men. It's not your only domain, but it is a primary domain.

And when you ignore it, or when you allow Satan to attack it and to supplant it and pretend like it doesn't exist, you do so to your own detriment. And when our culture does it, we do so to our own demise and the demise of the next generation. Thankfully, just like we saw with the Sabbath and just like we saw with paradise, what sin ruins, Christ restores. I've seen this happen a hundred different ways where a woman becomes a Christian, the lights come on, and she no longer has to apologize for being female, and she can embrace her God-given design.

And they begin to flourish and blossom in ways that are just absolutely profound and vice versa when men actually get their act together and stop being lazy and abdicating responsibility and actually embrace biblical manhood, I've seen their lives turn around, I've seen their families turn around. I've seen things that just in like night and day difference within three or four months the cruelness and the ego and the fighting and the disunity when they subject themselves to the gospel and embrace their true design in Christ, He begins to

heal that brokenness and he begins to restore that what the enemy took and those wounds and those scars.

God begins to massage those and nurse those and bring them back to a place of healing and that's what's available to us through the gospel. The gospel is Jesus Christ who is the image of God renewing and restoring what was lost by the fall. So sin does not erase the design, but it does mess it up. And so maybe you're listening to this sermon and you're saying, "You don't know my story, you don't know my house, you don't know my mom, you don't know my dad." And you're right, I don't and I'm sure it's complicated and I'm sure, absolutely sure, that sin has made a mess of God's original design.

It's obvious. And I'm not saying that snap your fingers and just do like you're supposed to do. That's not possible. But what you cannot do, Jesus Christ can do. And what you feel incapable of producing in and of yourself, the Holy Spirit can and will produce if you'll just surrender yourself and if you'll just say, "God, I'm handing it over to you. I'm no longer trying to control it. I want to offer my body as a living sacrifice, and I want you to renew my mind. And as you renew my mind and I offer my body, I'm entrusting you to redeem and restore what sin and Satan have wrecked in my life."

And if you'll make that decision, if you'll surrender your life to Jesus Christ and you'll just hand over the reins, these complexities and these issues and this brokenness in your home and in your life, God can and will begin to restore, but it begins with an act of faith and an act of repentance. And so if you're here this morning and that the Holy Spirit is stirring in you to make that kind of decision, we'll have a time of response. I'll be happy to pray with you if you want to pray in public.

You can also just scan these QR codes and say, "I want to start that conversation. I want to get into counseling. I want to talk to a pastor. I want to make my decision for Jesus Christ." And if you want to make that decision, you can indicate that with the QR code, or you can come down as the Lord leads. You may just want to pray for your home. You want to pray over your spouse maybe this morning as Valentine's Day is coming up. And just ask the Lord, "Would you help us to embrace your design and fulfill our calling as both man and woman in this home?"

Heavenly Father, we thank you for this time together in your word and we do give it to you. We take our hands off. We ask for your will and your way to be fulfilled in our life, that your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. We thank you for your gift of your design and creating men and women different. We thank you for our moms and our spouses and our sisters and the women in our life. We treasure them. We celebrate them. And the way that you've designed them.

Thank you that you've enabled them to do what men cannot as a helper, someone to come alongside so that we can together fulfill Your calling on our life and on our church and forgive us where we've denigrated that, undermined that, when we've silenced women or not giving them the opportunity to serve or lead or do the things that you've gifted and called them to do. Help us to embrace your true design so that we can fulfill the mission you've given to us to the fullest degree. And we pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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1. Transcript note: spoken as "men do have one less rib than women" (Wes then notes he has heard this is a myth); men and women both normally have 12 pairs of ribs. Source: OpenStax, *Anatomy and Physiology*, 2nd ed., §7.4 "The Thoracic Cage" ("It consists of the 12 pairs of ribs with their costal cartilages and the sternum"), openstax.org. ↩
2. Transcript note: spoken as "three to four years longer"; in 2021 U.S. life expectancy at birth was 79.3 years for women and 73.5 years for men, a gap of 5.8 years. Source: NCHS Data Brief No. 456, "Mortality in the United States, 2021" (CDC, Dec. 2022). ↩