

# A PROFOUND MYSTERY: CONVERSATIONS ABOUT SEXUALITY - Part 1

## God's Design

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Part of A Profound Mystery Conversations about Sexuality

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*...And God saw that it was good.*

*—Genesis 1:25 (ESV)*

*Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And 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.’ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God 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.’*

—Genesis 1:26-28 (ESV)

**There are three things that jump out at us from the above verses:**

- 1. God, which is a word in the singular sense, uses words such as “us” and “our” to refer to Himself, which Christianity has come to understand means that God is One and yet inherently \_\_\_\_, as the Trinity.**
- 2. God says He is creating “man” or humanity “in our image,” in the image of \_\_\_\_ as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, which indicates an inherently communal nature.**
- 3. God says that being created “in his own image” as “male and female” is an inherently \_\_\_\_ nature, man and woman, that, in a simpler way reflects God’s own communal nature.**

*...God is love.*

—1 John 4:8 (ESV)

**What we see happening in Genesis 1 is being done, at least in part, out of \_\_\_\_.**

*[Christians] believe that the living, dynamic activity of love has been going on in God forever and created everything else.*

—C.S. Lewis

**As we move from Genesis 1 to Genesis 2, we see God’s creation of humanity in more \_\_\_\_.**

*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. And the LORD*

*God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed.*

—Genesis 2:7-8 (ESV)

*Then the LORD God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.'*

—Genesis 2:18 (ESV)

**A more literal translation of the Hebrew word that many English translations have shown as “helper” would be “a helper like \_\_\_\_ him.”**

*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. 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.*

—Genesis 2:19-20 (ESV)

*So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up 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. Then the man said, 'This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.' Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.*

—Genesis 2:21-23 (ESV)

*And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good....*

—Genesis 1:31 (ESV)

**GOD CREATED HUMAN BEINGS AS MALE AND FEMALE TO...**

**1. reflect the “image of \_\_\_\_” into His world.**

**2. “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth,” to \_\_\_\_ and**

join God as co-creators in the process of producing life within the bond of marriage.

3. “subdue [the earth], and have dominion over” the rest of God’s creation as His \_\_\_\_ or caretakers.

4. to “become one flesh,” to have \_\_\_\_ with another, as an answer to being alone.

From these passages we see God showing us that sex was designed to be expressed in a “one flesh” relationship creating a bond between a man and a woman in the context of a committed relationship, or \_\_\_\_, of marriage.

The biblical understanding of a covenant is a relationship characterized by *agape* or unconditional, sacrificial \_\_\_\_ where faithfulness continues even when someone fails to uphold their promises in the covenant.

Today in America a marriage can be described as a covenant, but many could also be described as a \_\_\_\_.

But in a covenant, characterized by *agape* love, each person in the bond of marriage looks out first and foremost for the interest of the other - there’s a \_\_\_\_ here that is depicted in Genesis 2:25.

Romantic notions of love certainly characterize a marriage covenant, but in the end, romance or feelings aren’t enough to hold \_\_\_\_ any relationship made up of two people who struggle with sin.

*Jesus: ... ‘Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh”?’*

*—Matthew 19:4-5 (ESV)*

*‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.’ This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about*

*Christ and the church.*

*—Ephesians 5:31-32 (NIV)*

**5. to \_\_\_\_ the eventual union God desires between Christ and the people of God for eternity.**

*Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, 'Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure'— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.*

*—Revelation 19:6-8 (ESV)*

**Those who find themselves \_\_\_\_ are not left out of this promise - for God designed marriage to be a *symbol*, to reveal something even bigger, even if every person is unable to participate in it.**

*The purpose that God initiates in creation through the marriage of Adam and Eve, God completes in new creation through the marriage of Christ and the church, so that God's instituting marriage at the beginning is a sign pointing to God's finishing salvation at the end: 'It is done!' (Rev. 21:6) Marriage is a prophecy of salvation, from Adam and Eve in creation to Christ and the church in new creation.*

*—Darrin W. Snyder Belousek*

*Marriage is not a socially constructed arrangement which conforms to the wider cultural understanding of marriage, namely, a functional, utilitarian arrangement which satisfies our social and sexual needs and provides economic security. Instead, the Bible gives us not a commodified [or contractual] view of marriage, but a covenantal view of marriage designed to be a pointer to the great mystery of Christ and his church. The biblical account sets forth the design of marriage being unitive*

*(the two becoming one flesh), procreative (be fruitful and multiply), binary (He created them male and female) and... self-giving (marriage points to the sacrifice of Christ for his church, the Bride).*

—Timothy Tennent

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**Next Week - Sin's Damage**