

## **ROLES**

### Genesis 2

#### **THE ROLE OF THE HUSBAND: GENESIS 2:15**

In our time together today, we will focus on the roles and responsibilities of the husband and wife. We'll be primarily looking at Genesis 2 & Ephesians 5. Next week, we will continue this exploration picking up in Ephesians 5 and also examining 1 Peter 3. However, at the outset, we want to point out that the biblical vision for roles that we'll be looking at is vastly different from what the prevailing culture accepts.

In light of our culture, where people seek to switch genders, and try not to distinguish any differences between males and females, the Bible helps us to see how God created men and women differently. God created men and women to be different and these differences make a beautiful team and contribute to a healthy marriage.

#### **Tend and Keep**

We'll start our exploration in Genesis 2, looking at what God says about the man's role.

**READ: Genesis 2:15-17** - "Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.<sup>16</sup> And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat;<sup>17</sup> 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.""

There are several ways that we can look at the injunction given to Adam to tend and keep the garden of Eden. The first and primary way to understand this is that God gave Adam, and therefore mankind, the responsibility to oversee the created world. At the same time, we can also look at this as a picture for how a man should relate to and care for his wife. On your own, you can read Song of Solomon 4:12-16, in which Solomon applies this image of the garden to the sexual union that exists in marriage. (possibly expand garden analogy for marriage?)

**ASK:** What do you think it means to "tend" the garden?

- To "tend" speaks of exploring, taking care of, to cultivate it, to cause it to grow and become increasingly healthy, strong and profitable,

- By implication, you have to know what it needs in order to properly care for it. And to know what it needs you have to explore, investigate & discover. You are learning how something functions (in health and in stress).
- But our exploration goes “deeper” than pure scientific observation – we can also dive into the **“design”** of things. In other words, the ability to see and understand **what God’s purpose is for something** (someone) and seek to implement that knowledge into how we “care” for it. (leafy greens vs. grain crops to sun needs)

The application to marriage is that you should get to know your wife. Seek to better understand her. Find out what she likes, enjoys, and how she feels loved. It is also good to ask her what helps her rest well, to consider what kind of environment she thrives in; ask her about what challenges her (or inhibits her growth), what she is learning, etc.

- As a practical point, you may want to keep a note on your phone to keep track of the things you learn about her. (i.e. favorite foods/restaurants, flower, type of chocolate, coffee/hot beverage, treat, etc.)

This is a lifelong process, which can get richer as time goes on. I say it “can” get richer because it won’t unless you actually put in effort. While you may think you truly know and understand your wife, the truth is that when you’re dating and into your early marriage, you actually don’t know that much about each other. But as time goes on and you intentionally and continually get to know her, your understanding of her will grow. (Example of dreaming about a farm.)

**ASK:** What does it mean to “Keep” something?

- The “keep” speaks of protecting, guarding against external threats, watching over, maintaining internal purity.
- Keeping or protecting can also relate to you safeguarding your highest convictions.
- This gives us the divine prerogative of protection

In essence, Adam was called by God to exercise authority over creation by caring for it, understanding what it needs, what it does, what it would be good for, what its purpose is, etc. and to cultivate it towards increased fruitfulness. And while doing this he was to also keep a watchful eye to guard and protect it from harm or anything that would intrude to impede or diminish its fruitfulness or from fulfilling its divinely designed purpose.

In summary, the husband's role, as one who “tends & keeps”, as applied to the marriage relationship, shows us that he is meant to take the lead role, to be the leader as he explores, understands and puts to use what he has learned for the benefit of his wife, as well as to protect her. One of the ways he protects her is by “tending” her well, and again, in order to take care of something well you must know what it needs. (Example of plate too big)

## THE ROLE OF THE WIFE: GENESIS 2:18

As the story in Genesis continues, we'll turn our attention to what God says about the role of the wife.

**READ:** Genesis 2:18-23 – “And the LORD God said, “*It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.*”<sup>19</sup> Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought *them* to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that *was* its name.<sup>20</sup> So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.<sup>21</sup> And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place.<sup>22</sup> Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.<sup>23</sup> And Adam said: “*This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man.*”

**ASK:** Why was Eve, the first woman, created?

- There are two reasons given.
- First, Eve was created because Adam was alone and it was not good for him to be alone. In creating Eve, God gifted companionship to both men and women
- Second, Eve was created because Adam needed help!

**ASK:** God said that He would create a helper who would be “comparable to him [Adam].” What do you think that means?

- One word which should catch our attention is “comparable.” In other translations, this is rendered as “suitable” or “corresponding to.”
- This makes sense especially when we consider that after verse 18, God then brings all of the animals to Adam for him to name them. In going through this exercise, it became apparent to Adam that there was no created being yet which corresponded to him.

- Eve was tailor-made for Adam and as we talk about last week, they shared the deepest possible human intimacy and set the model for marriage.

## The Helper

The woman God created was called a “helper” or a “help meet.” There are a couple of really important things we want to say about this role. **First**, in context, the title of helper is very straightforward. Adam was given work to do and he was alone. Eve was then created so that Adam would not be alone and so that he would have help and companionship as they executed God’s will. In other words, God gave Adam the plan and Eve was created to aid and assist Adam as they worked to accomplish God’s will (Guzik).

**Second**, in our culture, many of us think that someone who is a helper is less than the one who is being helped. However, applying that view onto this passage in Genesis is simply incorrect. Adam was not fundamentally superior because He was created first and tasked with primary authority. In fact, it is helpful to remember that both Adam and Eve were given dominion and authority over the earth (Genesis 1:28). Similarly, Eve was not inferior because she was created last in order to meet the needs of her husband. Both shared the same dignity and inherent equality, and we believe that it remains true to this day in the marriage relationship.

The **third** point related to this that we want to highlight has to do with the Hebrew word for “helper.” It turns out that that word (*Ezer*) is used a number of times throughout the Bible to speak of how God helps His people. For instance, Psalm 33:20 says “*Our soul waits for the LORD; He is our help and our shield.*” Psalm 121:1-2 says “*I will lift up my eyes to the hills – from whence comes my help? My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.*”

Lastly, Psalm 146:5 says “*Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God.*” It is instructive for us to recognize that the title of “helper” which was originally given to Eve is later used to speak directly of the help which God gives to His people. We point this out because it affirms the dignity of the wife’s role in the marriage relationship. If it is good enough for the God of the universe to help His people, then it is admirable for a wife to find purpose and joy in helping her husband.

As a married couple, you are now on the same team. You complement each other and you should both listen to each other because your individual perspectives are

valuable. As a husband, you need to recognize that God has given you a helper, an ally (and you need one!). As a wife, you need to recognize that God has given you a leader.

For the husband, this means you have the responsibility to **lead well**. For the wife, it means you have the responsibility to **help well**. Together, this points you in the right direction to be the team that God has called you to be.

As you seek to help him, remember that one of the first and most important things you can do is to keep Jesus at the center of your life, your relationship with Christ must come first. Commune with Jesus and pray daily for your husband. Ask God how you can best help your husband.

Be careful that when you are helping your husband that you do so in a way that builds him up and not in a way that demeans him. Proverbs 14:1 says that a “*wise woman builds her house, but the foolish pulls it down with her hands.*” While it may be gratifying in the moment, remember that tearing your husband down will also tear down your marriage and create resentment in him against you.

Practically, it is good to ask your husband “*How can I help you today?*” and “*What can I do to help you in this?*”

One last thought on this – as the wife, you very well may be more capable, intelligent, experienced, and spiritually mature than your husband. Even if that is the case, we encourage you to not lose sight of the fact that your calling to be a helper to your husband does not change. The temptation to lead your husband instead may be strong, but the authority of God’s Word does not support that role reversal. Instead, we would encourage you to put all of your expertise and effort towards helping your husband be and become the man God created him to be. (Share example, time permitting)

## **Q & A with Guest Speakers**

**Tell us a little about yourselves?**

**How long have you been married?**

**How many Children and their ages?**

**What's something unique about you that you can share with us?**

### **From: Tend & Keep**

- To the husband: What does “tending and keeping” look like in your marriage. (i.e. how do you find ways to better understand your wife and what she needs.)
- What helps you continue to learn about your wife?
- Have you found any aspects of “protecting her” beyond the normal sphere of physical safety?) What does it look like in your lives?

### **From: Helper**

- To the wife: What does “helping” your husband look like? Have you found that there are ways to help that are not ultimately helpful?

**On Your Own:**

- What areas do you find easiest to “tend and keep”?
- What areas do you find the most difficult to “tend and keep”?
- What are the dangers that you see the need to protect from in your relationship, home, marriage?
- Discover your love languages (Matthew 7:12)
- Talk about what you are learning together in your quiet times
- Pray for one another in your individual quiet times

**Resources**

[Discovering the Mind of Woman](#) by Ken Nair