

Roots: You Complete Me
Genesis 2:18-25
Growth Group Discussion Guide

Begin with prayer. Invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you all through God's word, and to lead your discussion.

Opening Questions (try to get everyone involved in discussion):

- If you are married, what is one of your favorite things about being married?
- If you are single, do you desire to be married? Why or why not? (*Leaders: encourage people to share at a level where they are comfortable, and graciously make allowance for different needs and life stages*).
- What is your first, gut response to the question, "What is the purpose of marriage?" (Don't try to think of the "right" answer, but what first strikes you.)
- If you are or have been married, how did your expectations beforehand line up with your actual experience of being married? What do you wish someone had told you?
- Why do you think that the number of people getting married in the U.S. is decreasing? And why do you think the age at first marriage is increasing?

Read Genesis 2:18-24, then discuss the questions below.

- As you were reading this passage—or as you listened to this week's sermon—did any observations or insights jump out at you for the first time?
- What details in this passage do you find puzzling or troubling? What questions does it raise?
- In Genesis 1, God paused to assess his creation six times and "saw that it was good" or "very good." Then in contrast, in Gen 2:18, God states, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." How does this statement provide a clue as to one of the purposes of marriage?
- Pastor Josh claimed on Sunday that God's first purpose in creating marriage was **to satisfy the desire that we have for intimate connection**.
 - How/where do you see this principle in today's passage?
 - Josh also claimed, "*Marriage is the pinnacle of God's provision for our desire for intimate connection, but it won't satisfy us in the way God intended unless we treat it as the life-long covenant that it is.*" Do you agree or disagree? Why?
 - How can the assurance of life-long faithfulness increase intimacy in marriage?
- The use of the word *helper* can be misunderstood. The following passages reflect the most common use of the Hebrew word "ezer" in the Old Testament. Read them, then discuss.

What insight do they give as to the woman's role as a "suitable helper" for man?

- Psalm 33:20
- Psalm 54:4
- Psalm 70:5
- Psalm 89:19
- In Sunday's sermon, we learned that another purpose in God's gift of marriage is **to sanctify us** (make us holy).
 - Read Romans 8:28-30. What is the end goal of the process of sanctification in our lives?
 - How can close relationships—marriage or otherwise—be a tool through which God refines our character?

- How does marriage uniquely provide a laboratory for sanctification to happen? Are you willing—if you're married—to share any ways that this process has happened in your life?
- Josh shared a Tim Keller quote, claiming that when two spouses see their shared task as being part of one another's sanctification, we develop the "deep oneness that comes through a mutual journey to the same horizon." How can this happen, that our understanding of sanctification in marriage actually increases our intimacy?
- If you are not married, how can you see other close relationships as a laboratory through which God sanctifies you?
- The third purpose of marriage that Josh mentioned on Sunday is **to show us a lived-out picture of his grace.**
 - In several places, the biblical authors note that human marriage is a picture of the relationship between Jesus and his bride, the church. See Ephesians 5:21-32 as one example.
 - How has your spouse shown you a picture of God's grace?
 - What is the difference between relating with your spouse based on performance, as opposed to relating with him/her based on grace?
 - What must you do or experience individually if you want to have the resources to show this kind of grace to your spouse?
 - If you are single, how might this principle help you support your married friends or family members? How might their marriages show you something of God's grace for you?
- **Concluding application:**
 - Do you sense God encouraging you or challenging you in any way through this discussion? What action steps might you need to take?
 - What questions or difficulties remain unresolved? How can we, as a group, help you with those?

Sharing/Prayer

- As always, take some time to share areas where you need people to pray for you. Spend time praying for one another.
- Pray in response to today's Bible Study and discussion—confessing where confession is needed, praising God for the gospel, sharing your heart's desires with him as they pertain to this topic.