



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 4”

December 20th, 2009
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Informed. Insightful. Intelligent.



The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 4

Matthew 1:24-25

**24 Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife,
25 and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.**

We attend Church to obtain the mind of Christ, meaning, to have the Bible illuminated in our minds so that we can clearly understand the principles that Jesus taught and base our daily personal decisions on those principles.

We come to Church because we want to be obedient to the Bible, which is the doctrine of Jesus Christ, in an informed, insightful and intelligent manner.

I need to amend the takeaway point on the biblical design of gender a bit, to:

God has designed man as the cooperative coalition of husband and wife so that man can successfully achieve the objective that God has given us to exercise dominion over the earth, developing wisdom and knowledge in preparation for further responsibility in ~~heaven~~ our eternal life.

I'm changing "responsibility in heaven" to "responsibility in our eternal life" because in some passages of Scripture, the word "heaven" simply refers to the sky rather than to the location in which we will live during our eternal life. God defines the marital relationship as the primary relationship in our earthly life in **Genesis 2:24:**

24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

God has given us dominion over the earth in order to prepare us for eternal life. This preparation is the most important task that we have during our earthly life, because the Holy Spirit, through the pen of the Apostle Peter, informs us that the spirits of human beings will be the only thing that will carry over into the next world from this one. **2Peter 3:10-12** tells us:

**10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.
11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,
12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of**



which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?

As far as I know, my Dad has never been in charge of anything in corporate America. He worked for the U.S. Post Office as a clerk and a timekeeper for thirty years, and, as far as I know, never ran any operations or supervised any employees there. But my Dad raised my two brothers and me and took care of my Mom for fifty years, until death did them part in 2003. Now, Dad has remarried and is once again taking care of a lady who needs the care and affection of a husband.

The Scriptures and Dad's example tells me that you can be a leader in heaven even if you never set foot in a corporate office building. God gives us His principles in His Word, and He gives us the laboratory of the family, in which anyone can participate, to exercise those principles, so that we can learn them in preparation for eternal life.

In God's design, every female is under the protection of a man. Married women are protected by their husbands, and unmarried girls and young women are under the protection of their fathers or their father's oldest living male relative if their father is deceased. Before a woman is married in a traditional ceremony, the person officiating asks, "Who gives this woman to be married to this man?" The Biblical formality of fathers consenting to the transfer of the protection of a daughter to her husband still exists.

In God's design, a man did not propose marriage to a woman, but to the woman's father. A man became a potential husband by proving to his intended's father that he could take care of her. The suitor demonstrated this ability by paying the "bride price", which was a sum of money designated by the father as proof of sufficient resources to provide a home and an adequate lifestyle for the bride and for the children that she would conceive. The father generally kept the bride price in escrow in case the man reneged on his marital commitment and returned the woman to his care. **Exodus 22:16-17** codified this practice using a negative example:

16 "If a man entices a virgin who is not betrothed [meaning engaged to be married], and lies with her, he shall surely pay the bride-price for her to be his wife.

17 If her father utterly refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money according to the bride-price of virgins.

I did not have to pay a bride price to my wife's father, but I did have to quit school and get a job in order to provide Marie with a home. My plan was to live in married housing when I married her because I was in college as well, but Marie wasn't having it. I had to get an apartment and a job to pay the rent because she couldn't have her dog in married housing. Even in our day, in which Biblical



formalities are not common practice, a man should still never ask for a woman's hand (or any other part of her) until he is able to take it out of her father's pocket

God intends that an honorable man only has sex with a woman after he has proven his ability to take care of her and has promised to do so by to marrying her. Sex is not intended to be casual recreation, but rather, the deepest act of oneness and commitment. No one, including friends, siblings, parents, or children, is supposed to come between a husband and a wife. In **Matthew 19:4-6**:

4 And [Jesus] answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,'

5 and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh' ?

6 So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

God's plan is simple. Although the plan is easy to understand, it is, in many cases, much more difficult to execute. In the animal kingdom, when a male reaches physical maturity, he is driven, by instinct, to find a female with which to mate. When a female reaches physical maturity, she involuntarily gives off the mating signal that attracts males, and then selects a male with which to mate. Most animals do not require a commitment as part of the mating ritual.

Human beings have drives to mate as do the animals, but also, we are made in the image of God. God has given us the intellect that allows us to choose mates with whom we can form relationships that allow us to develop wisdom and knowledge in preparation for further responsibility in our eternal life. The sexual and emotional oneness of the marriage commitment is a key building block in preparing us for an eternal responsibility that animals will not have. Thus, our mating practices are to be different than those of the animals, and involve commitment, which leads to the development of "agapao" love.

Our enemy the devil is seeking to defeat God's program for our lives, even as he did in the garden. The devil has been very successful in persuading us that obtaining a commitment before sexual activity is not necessary before because to do so causes us to delay gratification. The devil continues to take the position that delayed gratification is unnecessary, our animal needs are most pressing, and that we should seek to satisfy them however we can, even to the detriment of our spiritual maturation. Of course, it is not the devil's program that we have further responsibility in our eternal life. Jesus tells us, in **John 10:10**:

10 The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

The devil, who is the thief, wants to steal our ability to mature. Maturity is developed, to a large degree, by going through the process and obtaining that



which we want in the manner that God designed. I talked recently to a young woman who was in college and was dating a young fellow. I asked her, "Why are you dating this young man?"

"I like him", was her reply, "and one of the reasons that people go to college is to date and to get to know one another."

"Well", I inquired, "since you came to college to date, do you have any idea as to how many young men you plan to date during your collegiate career?"

"I'm dating him", she responded, "and I don't really plan to date anyone else right now."

I asked, "Does he feel the same way? Are you the only one that he plans to date?"

"I hope so", she said.

"I hope so, too", I responded, "but I'm not very confident of that. Few people that I know married the first person that they dated. To me, it doesn't sound very likely that a person could find their soul mate in a random sample of people on their first try. I would bet that if you asked your girlfriends, most of them have had more than one boyfriend."

"Yeah", she said, "there is a lot of drama in the dorm."

"I'm glad you agree", I responded, "and that's why the Bible says that you should maintain your virginity until you actually find and marry your soul mate."

"Well", she said, "I'm not sure how reasonable that the Bible is in today's society."

"The Bible is more reasonable today than ever", I responded. "Let's just think for a minute. What commitment will your boyfriend have to make to you to have sex with you?"

"I'm not sure that I know what you mean", she responded, "do you mean like marriage?"

"Marriage is a commitment", I responded. "What other commitments are there?"

"Going together is sort of a commitment", she said, "and so is being engaged."

"So", I inquired, "is it reasonable for a young man that is going with you to expect to have sex with you?"

"Well, if I like him enough, it might be reasonable", she responded.

"Yeah", I said, "But what do you think will happen to you if you break up after you have sex? Isn't that where the drama comes from? Don't girls get possessive after they have sex with a guy? Don't you feel like the guy you're going with is yours?"

"Well, yeah", she replied, "once you start going with a guy, you do sort of feel like he's yours. I guess that if you have sex with him you would feel more like he's yours."



“And that’s God’s plan in the Bible,” I responded. “The Bible says that if you give guy your virginity without being married to him, he has to marry you and he can’t divorce you. But you just said that living by the Bible is not reasonable in today’s society. So, in today’s society, if he marries you, he can divorce you. And he doesn’t actually have to marry you at all. I’m sure that you know a lot of girls that have had sex with guys that have broken up with them.”

“Yeah”, she responded, “most of the girls I know.”

“How do those girls feel about the guy that had sex with them and then broke up with them?” I asked.

“Usually not very good”, she responded.

“That’s putting it mildly”, I said. “So, if you don’t want to feel bad about a guy, wouldn’t it make more sense to wait to have sex with a guy until after he makes a commitment to you?”

“Well”, she asked, “suppose you can’t get a guy to wait? If he can get someone else to have sex with him, why would he stay with me?”

“That’s a good question”, I responded, “but just because you have sex with him doesn’t mean that he won’t have sex with someone else. I just read an article from BusinessWeek magazine that reports that among girls fourteen to seventeen years old living in U.S. cities, about half get chlamydia, gonorrhea or trichomoniasis within two years of becoming sexually active. Just google sexually transmitted infections if you want to read the article.”

“If you’ve never had sex, you’re a virgin”, I continued, “and if you decide to have sex with a guy who is a virgin as well, neither of you can give the other a sexually transmitted disease, because neither of you has one. But these diseases are so prevalent because once guys start having sex with girls for recreation, they don’t usually stop with just one girl. Guys will have sex with as many girls as will let them. My point is that guys think differently than girls; guys don’t have the bonding hormones that girls have. You may think that having sex with a guy will make him stay with you, but it won’t.”

“Two things make guys stay with girls”, I said, “and a girl can’t control the two things. The two things are the guy’s maturity and the guy’s commitment. You can’t make a guy mature or make him commit by giving him sex. To a guy, sex is an activity, not a commitment. A guy only feels committed to a girl after he has voluntarily committed himself to her. And a guy will only commit to a girl when he is mature enough to decide that he is ready to settle down, and the girl is the one girl that he wants to be with for the rest of his life. As long as a guy is playing around, he will not commit.”

“Let me tell you what a guy does when he is mature enough to make a commitment.” I continued. “He asks his girl to marry him, and then marries her and takes care of her. A guy is not committed until he makes a commitment. There are a lot of women in the world that have been engaged to be married, but



never actually got married, because a guy is not committed until he actually makes a commitment.”

“And that’s why the Bible says that you should not have sex with the guy until he marries you.” I said, “Until he marries you, he is not committed; he is just playing. And the ability to play sex with girls keeps men from making commitments. And it’s really bad for you if he’s just playing with you while you’re being serious with him, which is usually what happens when a guy has sex with a girl to whom he is not married.”

Now, in our last lesson, we talked about the pregnancy of the aged Elizabeth. But we skipped the most important part of the story. **Luke 1:26-27** records:

26 Now in the sixth month [of Elizabeth’s pregnancy] the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth,
27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary.

Joseph was both mature and committed to Mary. Although they were engaged to be married, Mary was still a virgin. Joseph was not playing with Mary, but he maturely made a commitment to Mary and planned to wait until their wedding night to consummate their marriage. But Gabriel had some information for Mary that would change the plan, as **Luke 1:28-33** records:

28 And having come in, the angel said to her, “Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!”

29 But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was.

30 Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS.

32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David.

33 And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”

Mary had a question about the process, as **Luke 1:34-37** records:

34 Then Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I do not know a man?”

35 And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.

36 Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren.



37 For with God nothing will be impossible.”

Once Mary realized that she would not have to betray her intended husband to fulfill the plan of God, she agreed to make herself available, as **Luke 1:38** records:

38 Then Mary said, “Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

When the angel departed from Mary, Mary went to see Elizabeth to verify the angel’s story. Mary found that Elizabeth was indeed pregnant, as **Luke 1:41-45, 56** tells us:

41 And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

42 Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!

43 But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

44 For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.

45 Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord.”

56 And Mary remained with [Elizabeth] about three months, and returned to her house.

Let’s go back over this episode, shall we? Mary was betrothed, meaning engaged to be married, to Joseph. Mary was living at home, waiting for Joseph to complete his preparations for their marriage. Joseph paid the bride price and was completing his preparations for the wedding, when he found out that Mary had left town. Joseph went to see Mary’s father, and asked, “Where did Mary go?”

Mary’s father replied, “Mary has gone to attend to her cousin Elizabeth, who has become pregnant.”

“Well, I guess that’s okay”, Joseph responded, “After we get married, Mary will be pregnant herself and she will need help from other women, so I guess that it’s okay that she went to help someone else.”

After three months, Mary returned, and Joseph noticed that she looked different. She seemed less like a virgin girl and more like a pregnant woman. Joseph knew that he had not done anything to make Mary pregnant, because Mary had not even been in town for the last three months. Joseph was mature and committed to Mary, but with Mary being pregnant by someone other than himself, Joseph had a problem. What do you do when someone that you love and to whom you have made a mature commitment sins against you? **Matthew 1:19** tells us:

19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make [Mary] a public example, was minded to put her away [or divorce her]



secretly.

What does the Scripture mean by a public example? **John 8:2-5** records:

2 Now early in the morning [Jesus] came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them.

3 Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to [Jesus] a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst,

4 they said to Him, “Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act.

5 Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?”

There is no question that the woman, who was caught in the very act of adultery, had sinned. But Jesus was teaching all of the people in the Temple, and there was probably no more public place that the Pharisees could have brought the woman to reveal her sin. She was being made a public example because the men bringing her to Jesus did not care about her at all, but only about challenging Jesus.

But Joseph was maturely committed to Mary. He did not want to marry her because of her apparent infidelity, but his mature, committed love for her allowed him to have compassion for her situation and desire to spare her the embarrassment of making their divorce public. But Mary actually had not been unfaithful. **Matthew 1:20-23** continues:

20 But while [Joseph] thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

21 And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.”

22 So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying:

23 “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.”

Joseph was not in love just with the idea of having sex with Mary; Joseph was in love with Mary. When the angel assured Joseph that Mary had not been unfaithful, Joseph not only spared Mary the public embarrassment of a divorce, but Joseph immediately brought Mary into his home as his wife, taking responsibility for Mary’s pregnancy and sparing her the embarrassment of having to bear God’s child out of wedlock. **1Corinthians 13:7** tells us that love:

7 [Love] bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

And Joseph loved Mary maturely. Joseph did not marry Mary just to have sex with her, but because he truly loved her, as he shows in **Matthew 1:24-25**:



**24 Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife,
25 and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.**

It was at least six months between the time that Joseph married Mary and the time that Mary had the baby Jesus. It was some time after that that they consummated the marriage, because it took Mary some time to recover from childbirth. But Joseph was patient, not because God commanded him to be, but because he loved Mary.

The lesson of the Christmas Story for young people is to wait patiently for love. The “A” portion of **1Corinthians 13:4** tells us:

4 Love is patient, love is kind.

There is no greater gift that we can give one another than patience. We all have growing to do, and we all have situations through which we must go. But we can make it if we are patient with one another.

Young ladies, an impatient young man does not love you. He simply wants to enjoy the physical feeling of having your body. And when he has received your sexuality, you will find that he is neither committed nor mature, but he simply wanted to play with you. But God has not designed you as a toy; God has designed man as the cooperative coalition of husband and wife so that man can successfully achieve the objective that God has given us to exercise dominion over the earth, developing wisdom and knowledge in preparation for further responsibility in our eternal life.

God did not make you to be a toy; He made you to be an integral part of His Kingdom, as **John 3:16-17** tells us:

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

Jesus was not born fully grown, but went through a thirty year process to go from a baby to a man, spent four years in ministry, and then suffered, bled and died on Calvary's Cross that He might provide salvation for us. He patiently endured the process of atoning for our sin because He loves us. Let us emulate His example, and patiently endure the process of developing maturity and making commitments that we keep, most importantly, the commitment to love one another, as **John 13:34-35** says:

34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”



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