



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 5”

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Informed. Insightful. Intelligent.



The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 5

Genesis 12:2

2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing.

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.

Our takeaway point in this series is that 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. I use the word man in the way that others might use the word mankind, because in **Genesis 1:27**, God tells us:

27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

In God's design, the male of the species was never intended to be by himself. In **Genesis 2:18**:

18 And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."

In God's plan, a helper is not one that duplicates the activities of the one that they are helping. When people help one another, they create a cooperative coalition, meaning that people are doing different things together to accomplish a task, like a baseball pitcher and catcher. When two people are doing the same thing to accomplish a task, they are not really helping one another; they are rather, working in parallel. Helping implies teamwork, and man needed someone to play a role on the team that the man could not play himself.

To learn to walk, children must first learn to balance themselves as they stand upright and then they must learn to move their legs properly. If a child does not have the ability to balance, someone can help him walk by holding his arms to balance him. But a child that can both balance and move his legs but is afraid to walk somewhere by himself does not actually need "help" walking, but they need company, someone to walk with them to reassure them of their abilities.

When God created the woman, He created a helper for the man in the sense that He gave the woman a different role than the man. In **Genesis 3:16**, God said to the woman:



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16 In pain you shall bring forth children.

In **Genesis 3:17-18**, God said to the man:

17 “Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life.

18 Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field.

Both the man and the woman were penalized because of their sin. The penalty, however, was in coordination with God’s prime directive for fruitful multiplication, as we can tell by the phrase “bring forth” in the penalties. The female was specifically tasked with bringing forth and caring for children while the male was tasked with bringing forth and caring for the produce of the field that they were to eat for the rest of their lives. Food is essential to sustain life, and children are essential to carry out the prime directive to increase and multiply. The nurture of children leads to the development of family, which is the framework that God has ordained that we use to achieve the objective of developing wisdom and knowledge in preparation for further responsibility in heaven. Thus, men and women have to form a cooperative coalition in this life in order to prepare for life in the next world.

The word “family” describes the offspring of a sexual relationship. Mankind is really one big family, as God only created two people, and everyone else is an offspring of those two people. But as the Bible continues, God divided the one big family into separate units. **Genesis 11:1-2, 4** records:

1 Now the whole earth had one language and one speech.

2 And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there.

4 And they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.”

Mankind, being a family, wanted to build one city and congregate in one geographical area rather than taking dominion over the whole earth. But having one population center was not that which God had in mind. God intervened to make sure that man’s plan did not happen, as **Genesis 11:5-8** records

5 But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built.

6 And the LORD said, “Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them.

7 Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.”

8 So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city.



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The different languages that exist on earth divide the original family into large family units, called nations. God then began mixing the nations by moving individual family units from one nation to another, as He recorded in **Genesis 12:1-2, 5**:

1 Now the LORD had said to Abram: “Get out of your country, from your family and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you.

2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing.

5 Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother’s son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan.

As the Biblical focus shifts from the family of mankind to the family of Abram, through which God chose to work, the problems that God addresses shift from global problems to personal ones. **Genesis 12:10-13** records:

10 Now there was a famine in the land [of Canaan], and Abram went down to Egypt to dwell there, for the famine was severe in the land.

11 And it came to pass, when he was close to entering Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, “Indeed I know that you are a woman of beautiful countenance.

12 Therefore it will happen, when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, ‘This is his wife’; and they will kill me, but they will let you live.

13 Please say you are my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I may live because of you.”

Genesis 2:24 tells us that God’s plan is that men be monogamous, meaning, that a man should have one wife as his companion for life. Men, who were given dominion over women in **Genesis 3:16**, took advantage of the position of power given them by God to institute the practice of polygamy, as first recorded in **Genesis 4:19**, in which men had more than one wife. Abram’s people did not practice polygamy, but the famine in Canaan gave Abram the opportunity to practice serial monogamy, which allows men to have more than one wife, but only one wife at a time.

Abram wanted to give his extremely desirable wife, his half-sister Sarai, to the Pharaoh, and marry another woman.

Neither going to Egypt nor giving up his wife was Abram’s only alternative, so why would Abram volunteer to give up the extremely desirable Sarai? Well, because Sarai was failing at her God-given task. Abram could not produce crops in Canaan because of the famine, and Sarai could not produce children, as she was barren. In **Genesis 12:2**, God told Abraham:

2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing.



At this juncture of human history, the word nation means a large family. After the flood recorded in **Genesis 6-8**, the land was vacant, and in **Genesis 10**, we see the list of various large families formed by the prolific number of offspring produced by Noah's children and grandchildren. In **Genesis 11**, God moved the large families of mankind out into different geographical regions to form new nations. God told Abram to leave his home territory to be the father of a great nation, which meant to Abram that he would have many children, but, unfortunately, the land to which God sent Abram did not produce crops, and Abram's wife Sarai did not produce children.

Fortunately for Abram, he could fix his side of the problem, because there was plenty of more fertile ground to which he could move. But Sarai was personally infertile, and she took her lack of fertility with her to whatever land they traveled.

Although Sarai was beautiful, the "A" part of **Proverbs 31:30** says:
30 Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing.

To Abram, Sarai was like an expensive sports car with a blown motor. It looks really good in the driveway, but it is worthless out on the street. Abram, being a godly man, was not a polygamist, but Abram wanted offspring and Sarai was not forthcoming. So Abram decided to go to Egypt to trade Sarai in to get a different model, to get a different, fertile wife. In **Genesis 12:14-16**:

14 So it was, when Abram came into Egypt, that the Egyptians saw [Sarai], that she was very beautiful.

15 The princes of Pharaoh also saw her and commended her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken to Pharaoh's house.

16 He treated Abram well for her sake. He had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male and female servants, female donkeys, and camels.

The Pharaoh, unwittingly, went along with Abram's program, and Abram was able to unload his beautiful, infertile wife on the Pharaoh. Abram hit the mother lode because, since he actually was Sarai's brother, the Pharaoh treated Abram well and paid Abram a large bride-price for Sarai. Abram made out like a fat rat in a cheese factory, and would be able to start looking for a beautiful Egyptian wife just as soon as the Pharaoh married Sarai and sealed the deal.

But God had a different plan. God wanted Abram and Sarai to bring "the child of the promise" into the world. In our previous two lessons, we discussed other children of the promise. John the Baptist was born to a woman who was past the age of childbearing, and Jesus Christ was a born to a virgin. God does miraculous things with the people whom He chooses to use, but God's timing forces the people whom He chooses to use to be patient with His plan. As the old preacher used to say, God may not come when you want Him, but He's always right on time. His time, of course.

The people whom God chooses to use need to have faith while they suffer deprivation in some form as God brings His plan into fruition. God does that



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which we find counterintuitive because He is wiser than we are, and He has determined that the world can only be redeemed from sin by the faith that He develops in His servants as they suffer for Him. **1Peter 4:1-2** tells us:

1 Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,

2 that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.

People hate to suffer, but, because of sin, suffering is the key to almost all human progress, whether individual or group progress. Because of sin, work is toil and childbirth is pain. Family relationships, maintaining marital commitments and raising children call for endurance and may lead to disappointment and suffering, as **Proverbs 10:1, 19:13, 21:9, 19:3** tells us:

1 A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is the grief of his mother.

13 A foolish son is the ruin of his father, and the contentions of a wife are a continual dripping.

9 Better to dwell in a corner of a housetop, than in a house shared with a contentious woman.

3 The foolishness of a man twists his way, and his heart frets against the LORD.

The big problem is recorded in **Romans 3:23**, which says:

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Everyone with whom we come into contact, family, stranger, friend or foe, is a sinner, and just as the man and the woman in the garden caused one another to suffer by their sin, we all cause anyone with whom we have a relationship to endure suffering as a result of our sin.

Neither Abram nor Sarai wanted to continue suffering the indignity and disappointment of their barrenness, which was caused by plan of God rather than sin, but was as embarrassing as a sin would have been to them both.

Abram was ready to trade Sarai for a wife that would produce the nation that God promised him. Sarai was ready to trade Abram for a husband that already had a nation, one that would not make her a nomad, but rather give her a palatial home in a rich kingdom. Abram proposed that Sarai tell the Pharaoh that she was available to marry him, and use her attractiveness to seduce the Pharaoh. Sarai deceived the Pharaoh and went home with him, indicating that she was not a victim, but rather a co-conspirator. Their plan worked, and each of them was about to receive the benefit that they desired, until God intervened, as **Genesis 12:17-20** tells us:

17 But the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife.



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18 And Pharaoh called Abram and said, “What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife?

19 Why did you say, ‘She is my sister’? I might have taken her as my wife. Now therefore, here is your wife; take her and go your way.”

20 So Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him; and they sent him away, with his wife and all that he had.

The Pharaoh never had any intention of killing Abram to get his wife. He did not even take back the bride-price that he had paid Abram for Sarai, but gave Abram both his wife and the goods. We read in **Genesis 12:2**, that God told Abram:

2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing.

God promised Abram that he would become a great nation. Abram's supposed fear of the Pharaoh was so totally unfounded that I postulate that Abram wasn't really afraid at all, but merely attempting to get rid of a defective wife.

Abram and Sarai had a problem with each other because they were looking through the wrong end of the telescope. They had much for which to be thankful, but were focused on their temporary disappointment rather than the promise of God. They needed an attitude adjustment. I'm reminded of the man that said, "I was angry because I had no shoes, until I met a man that had no feet."

As Jesus was reclining at the Last Supper, preparing for the ordeal of His Crucifixion, He reassured the disciples, in **John 16:32-33**:

32 Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.

33 These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

In other words, after the advent of sin, temporary trouble and short-term suffering are part of the deal, but God is still in control, and has our overall and eternal destiny in His hands. If God promises you that you will become a great nation, as He did Abram, then a great nation is that which you will become, regardless of how unlikely it appears to be to you. Paul tells us, in **Philippians 4:6-8**:

6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are



lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

If your anxiety is so high and your prayer so lacking that you cannot find the hand of God in your situation, the peace of God will not be with you, and your focus will be on that which is false, unjust, impure, ugly, and neither virtuous nor praiseworthy. But Jesus says to be of good cheer, and the Holy Spirit says, through the pen of the Apostle Paul, that we ought to pray rather than to be anxious. If we want the happiness of the peace of God, we have to change to focus from disappointment to faith.

One of the most interesting principles that I have come across is that no person can make another person “happy”. Happiness is gratitude for having wisdom and understanding, and it comes from within. **Proverbs 3:13, 14, 18** says:

13 Happy is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gains understanding;

14 For her proceeds are better than the profits of silver, and her gain than fine gold.

18 She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy are all who retain her.

When a person can wisely assess their situation and find the providence of God their situation, they will be grateful to God, and gratitude leads to happiness. If a person chooses to be angry about the negative rather than grateful for the positive, they will be unhappy regardless of the situation, because there is always something negative in our sinful situation. If you choose to be grateful for that which you have rather than being angry about that which you do not have, you can be happy, regardless of the situation. Of course, if a spouse is addicted to a controlled substance, physically violent, or having an extramarital affair without provocation, leaving the marriage may be in order, but in situations other than those, we ought heed the admonition of the Apostle Paul, in

Philippians 4:11-13:

11 Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:

12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

The one that is in control of our lives is Christ. We have dominion over some things, but Christ is in control. The knowledge of evil causes us dissatisfaction, as we try to avoid the suffering that evil brings us. But simply because we know that evil exists does not mean that we can discern the difference between actual evil and our discomfort with the plan of God, which is not under our personal control.



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God's plan was that Abram and Sarai miraculously bring the "child of the promise" into the world long after Sarai passed the age of childbearing. The "child of the promise" would not have been a miraculous child had his parents previously had other children. Rather than being the "child of the promise", he would simply have been a "change of life" baby borne naturally by an extremely fertile woman. Sarai's barrenness was not evil, and Abram's attempts to get a more fertile wife would not have remedied evil, but would have simply worked counter to the plan of God. But God did not reveal His entire plan to Abram, because God required Abram to act in faith.

I listened to Joseph, Abram's great-grandson, whose brothers hated him and sold him into Egyptian slavery. His slave master thought that Joseph was making a play for his wife, and threw Joseph into an Egyptian prison. But in the prison, Joseph met a man whom the Pharaoh sent to jail. When the Pharaoh pardoned the man, the man told the Pharaoh about Joseph's ability to interpret dreams, and Joseph used his God-given ability interpret the Pharaoh's dream, take over the economic system of Egypt, and then to become the second in command, after the Pharaoh, in Egypt. When another great famine came to Canaan, and the brothers that sold Joseph into Egyptian slavery came to Egypt to buy food, Joseph told them, in **Genesis 50:20-21**:

20 But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.

21 Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones." And [Joseph] comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

Joseph had the perspective that Abram did not, and we ought emulate Joseph's perspective. Jesus tells us, in **John 13:34-35**:

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."

This is the key. If I love you, I will recognize that you will have faults and foibles. **Romans 3:23** hasn't changed in the last twenty minutes. It still says:

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

But the admonition of God is for us to love one another? What does that mean for husbands and wives? Well, it means that every morning when you wake up, your first and foremost thought should be, "What can I do to make my spouse's life worth living today?" God tells the man and the woman 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.

Husband and wives are to be one with one another and love one another, because eventually, sons and daughters are going to marry and move away. Eventually, parents are going to leave us here as they go on to be with the Lord.



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A few months after my younger brother graduated from college, my Dad sent me a post card from London, then Paris, then the Orient, then Hawaii, and then, finally, one day, after he was back at home, I called him. “What’s the deal on all of the post cards?” I asked him.

“Your mother wanted to go on a trip around the world, so I took her”, he responded.

Mom and Dad were inseparable, even when Mom started losing her mental faculties to Alzheimer’s’ disease. Brothers and sisters, don’t count on being young and strong forever, because the day is coming when you are going to need a companion, and if you haven’t shown love to the one that you promised to love, they may not be around to show love to you when you really need them. Remember Abram’s plan of serial monogamy. It still exists in our day. God tells us that it is not good for a man to be alone, and God takes the long view. You may think that it’s alright to be alone when you are young and strong, but eventually, you are going to need somebody, and the people that were in your life from birth may not be there to help you.

Disappointments will not survive. Trouble, heartaches and pains will soon be over. We are just here temporarily to learn to serve God in our next life. We are just here temporarily to learn to serve God in our next life.

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. The only way that we can do that is to love one another, even as the Lord has loved us, with all of our faults and foibles, with all of our mistakes and misdeeds.

Let us be wise, look for the good in our situation and be happy with one another. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

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