



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 18”

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Informed. Insightful. Intelligent.



The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 18

Genesis 31:49:

49 “May the LORD watch between you and me when we are absent one from another.

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 on the Biblical Design of Gender 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.

In our last lesson, we chronicled the competition between the two sisters, Leah and Rachel, who were married to Jacob. Jacob was married to two women, not by the design of God, but by the design of his father-in-law Laban. Rachel, the younger of Laban’s daughters was beautiful, but Leah, the older, was cross-eyed. So when Jacob asked Laban for the hand of his daughter Rachel in marriage, Laban decided to kill two birds with one stone by tricking Jacob into marrying Leah as well.

Immature siblings often see one another as rivals, but generally, with time and maturity, siblings mature past the rivalry stage. But by marrying both of his daughters to Jacob, Laban facilitated the continuation of their sibling rivalry, putting his daughters in competition for Jacob’s affection.

What causes sibling rivalry? Siblings don't choose each other or the family into which they are born. Siblings may be of different sexes, are probably of different ages and temperaments, and worst of all, they have to share the attention of their parents, which are the two people they each most want for themselves.

Other factors include:

Position in the family. The oldest child may be burdened with responsibilities for the younger children or the younger child may try to catch up with an older sibling.

Gender. A son may feel rivalry with his sister because his father seems more gentle with her. On the other hand, a daughter may wish she could go on the hunting trip with her father and brother.



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Age. A five and an eight year old can play some games together but when the youngest enters middle school at eleven as the oldest enters high school at fourteen, they will probably be poles apart.

I imagine that Leah hoped that someone would come along that would love her, even as the tall, dark and handsome stranger Jacob had come for her beautiful younger sister. But her father Laban, rather than waiting for a man that would want Leah, married Leah to Jacob against Jacob's will. When Jacob discovered that which Laban did, Jacob rejected Leah and demanded her beautiful younger sister as was specified in the original agreement, leaving Leah married to a man that did not want her. So God intervened on Leah's behalf.

Genesis 29:31-35 tells us:

31 When the LORD saw that Leah was unloved, He opened her womb; but Rachel was barren.

32 So Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben; for she said, "The LORD has surely looked on my affliction. Now therefore, my husband will love me."

Leah had five more sons and a daughter, but even the intervention of God and having seven children did not make Jacob love Leah. Jacob eventually had eleven children by three women and was not particularly interested in any of them, neither the women nor the children, because he had his heart set on Rachel. All of the others were given to him against his will, and men don't really value that which they do not want and for which they do not have to work.

Women who are the aggressor in relationships, who call men to ask them out, ask them to dance, conveniently have two tickets to a show, or offer sex out of wedlock in order to get the man's attention and affection are acting counter to the male ambition and animal drive that God has designed in men.

Men are designed to respond to challenge. Take away the challenge and a man's interest wanes. One of the reasons that men fail to support the easy women they get pregnant out of wedlock and that so many academically and career oriented women that are highly accomplished are unmarried, 70%, according to the statistics, is because these women, or women in general, are not a sufficient challenge.

Now, don't misunderstand me. I do not mean that women are not challenging in terms of competition. But the relationship between a man and a woman is not intended to be a competition. A man is not designed to compete WITH a woman because, in the normative case, should the man uses his full strength, the woman is no competition. **1Peter 3:7** says:

7 Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

A man in competition WITH a woman has to temper his competitive effort to account for her weakness. Men are not generally interested in competing



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WITH women, but most men are attracted to the challenge of competing FOR the approval of a woman. To a man, a woman is someone to be striven for and attained, and if she is too easily attained, a man doesn't want her because she's not worth enough.

After Brittany graduated from college, she found herself being stressed about not having a boyfriend, but when she sat down to complain to her counselor about the difficulty in finding one, her counselor asked her, "Do all your girlfriends have boyfriends?"

"Yes", Brittany replied, "they do."

"Do the majority of your girlfriends think that their boyfriends are in love with them?" the counselor asked.

"Well, I don't know about love", said Brittany, "but they have a companion."

"A companion, you say?" asked the counselor. "In other words, your girlfriends are having sex with guys that they call boyfriends, whom they are not sure really love them, but it's for now."

"Uh, yes", replied Brittany.

"You want that kind of guy?" asked the counselor. "Do you want to be that kind of girl? Having sex with guys that you aren't really sure care about you? You want a guy to use your body, your mind, your soul, just for now?"

"Well, no" said Brittany, "and that's part of the problem. I can't get anybody because I don't want to be a 'right now' girl. I'm looking for someone I can be with forever."

"Well, at twenty-three, you're not going to find too many males with the maturity for the long haul", said the counselor. "So, you're going to have to be patient. Because so many women now are willing to be satisfied with having someone "right now", women have trained guys that they don't have to make commitments. They don't have to make a woman special to them. Sex doesn't have to mean anything. Companionship is enough to convince most girls to give them some. So, you've all trained guys not to think of permanency or the specialness of a woman. So, because all your girlfriends have done this, you, and young ladies like you are going to have to wait until these men mature, and want the kind of woman that you are. So talk to your girlfriends about that."

But Jacob was not like the guys in question. Jacob rolled up on Laban's house, took one look at Rachel and decided that he wanted her. Jacob wanted Rachel so much he decided to work for her father for free just to be near Rachel. Rachel was Jacob's gold medal, and Jacob was competing for Rachel like a man in the Olympics. When Laban realized that which Jacob was doing, he took pity on Jacob. **Genesis 29:15, 18-20** records:

15 Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my relative, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what should your wages be?"

18 Now Jacob loved Rachel; so he said, "I will serve you seven years for Rachel your younger daughter."



19 And Laban said, “It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to another man. Stay with me.”

20 So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed only a few days to him because of the love he had for her.

Seven years was as a few days. That’s love and devotion. And you may remember that Jacob met Rachel when she was working for her father, so Rachel was schooled on how to work for a man. Rachel knew what to do and she did it. How could another woman with a few children pull Jacob away from Rachel? They couldn’t.

But Rachel wasn’t perfect. When she saw that God blessed her sister with children but not her, rather than going down in prayer, she went to see Jacob. But her challenge to Jacob made him angry, as **Genesis 30:1-2** tells us:

1 Now when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister, and said to Jacob, “Give me children, or else I die!”

2 And Jacob’s anger was aroused against Rachel, and he said, “Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?”

God was keeping Rachel barren because of the imbalance in Jacob’s feelings between Rachel and her sister Leah. Since Rachel had Jacob, Leah had the children. Rachel enlisted the aid of her maid to compete with her sister Leah, but it wasn’t until Rachel stopped competing and cooperated with Leah that God changed His mind about the situation. **Genesis 30:22-24** records:

22 Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb.

23 And she conceived and bore a son, and said, “God has taken away my reproach.”

24 So she called his name Joseph, and said, “The LORD shall add to me another son.”

Once his beloved Rachel had her child, Jacob was ready to go home. But Laban was not ready for Jacob to go home. **Genesis 30:25-28** tells us:

25 And it came to pass, when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, “Send me away, that I may go to my own place and to my country.

26 Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and let me go; for you know my service which I have done for you.”

27 And Laban said to him, “Please stay, if I have found favor in your eyes, for I have learned by experience that the LORD has blessed me for your sake.”

28 Then he said, “Name me your wages, and I will give it.”

Laban wanted to keep Jacob, but so far, all Jacob has received is room, board, four wives and eleven children. Jacob has an inheritance at home, and he wants to see his parents, but he sees the opportunity to avoid going home empty handed. So he works out a deal with Laban to work for him a while longer.

Genesis 30:32 records that Jacob told Laban:



32 Let me pass through all your flock today, removing from there all the speckled and spotted sheep, and all the brown ones among the lambs, and the spotted and speckled among the goats; and these shall be my wages.

Since the majority of the flock is white, Jacob is making a reasonable request. If Laban has all the white animals and Jacob has all of the colored ones, then when the time comes to part company, both Jacob and Laban will be able to tell which of them is the owner of each animal. Laban agreed to the deal, but then he cheated Jacob. **Genesis 30:35-36** records:

35 So [Laban] removed that day the male goats that were speckled and spotted, all the female goats that were speckled and spotted, every one that had some white in it, and all the brown ones among the lambs, and gave them into the hand of his sons.

36 Then he put three days' journey between himself and Jacob, and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks.

Okay, said Jacob, I guess I'm starting from scratch. If that's the way you want to play it, okay. So Jacob developed a remedy. **Genesis 30:37-39** says:

37 Now Jacob took for himself rods of green poplar and of the almond and chestnut trees, peeled white strips in them, and exposed the white which was in the rods.

38 And the rods which he had peeled, he set before the flocks in the gutters, in the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink, so that they should conceive when they came to drink.

39 So the flocks conceived before the rods, and the flocks brought forth streaked, speckled, and spotted.

Jacob, being an experienced herdsman, knew that certain chemicals in the wood of these trees were capable of affecting the animals. A report in the August 2004 issue of New Zealand Tree Grower suggests that feeding sheep with fodder from poplars increases conception rate and number of lambs born. So Jacob used his knowledge of animal husbandry to manipulate Laban's flock so that the flock grew but the majority of the sheep had colored markings on them. Once Jacob built his portion of the flock up to sufficient size, Laban and his sons realized that which was happening and were not happy about it. **Genesis 31:1-3** says:

1 Now Jacob heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, "Jacob has taken away all that was our father's, and from what was our father's he has acquired all this wealth."

2 And Jacob saw the countenance of Laban, and indeed it was not favorable toward him as before.

3 Then the LORD said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your fathers and to your family, and I will be with you."

But Jacob had a problem. Jacob's wives are Laban's daughters, and Jacob wondered whether they would leave a place with which they are familiar to



go to a land in which they would be strangers. So, even though the God of Heaven told Jacob to leave, Jacob decided that he could not make such a decision without the input of his wives. **1Peter 3:7** says:

7 Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

So Jacob explained to his wives that, although their father tried to cheat him, he had prevailed over their father and gained the flock. Rachel and Leah knew that Jacob was telling the truth, because their father had cheated both of them. Laban cheated Leah, by giving her a husband that was intended for someone else, and Laban cheated Rachel by giving her sister to the man that she thought would be completely hers. So the sisters chose their husband over their father, the man that cheated them all, as **Genesis 31:14-16** records:

14 Then Rachel and Leah answered and said to [Jacob], “Is there still any portion or inheritance for us in our father’s house?

15 Are we not considered strangers by [our father Laban]? For he has sold us, and also completely consumed our money.

16 For all these riches which God has taken from our father are really ours and our children’s; now then [Jacob], whatever God has said to you, do it.”

Rachel was bonded with her husband because of his devotion. Leah was bonded with her husband because of the children. Jacob brought them a reasonable proposal with a good financial projection, and, as good wives should, they realized the truth of his logic and agreed with his proposition. So Jacob gathered all and started for home, and Laban found out about it three days later.

Rachel, however, was a believer in the teraphim, which were “good luck” statues that the Mesopotamians kept. Rachel grew up relying on these good luck charms, and she was afraid that if she left them behind, her father Laban would have “good luck” finding them as they fled, so she took them.

Rachel’s thinking was irrational; Laban would be able to find Jacob with or without the teraphim because Laban knew where Jacob was going. Laban was able to catch Jacob because Jacob was going back to his original home with flocks and herds that had to graze as they travelled, and Laban had no cattle slowing him down as he rushed to catch Jacob.

And Rachel put Jacob’s plan in danger; Jacob carefully planned his acquisition of possessions from Laban so that Laban could not claim that Jacob was a thief as did Esau. Jacob’s flocks had markings on them and Laban’s flocks were white. But Rachel gave Laban a reason to call Jacob’s honesty into account, as Jacob could be held accountable for Rachel theft of Laban’s teraphim. Rachel was trying to help Jacob by taking the teraphim, but her help turned out to be harmful when Laban caught up with them, as **Genesis 31:26-32** tells us:



26 And Laban said to Jacob: “What have you done, that you have stolen away unknown to me, and carried away my daughters like captives taken with the sword?

27 Why did you flee away secretly, and steal away from me, and not tell me; for I might have sent you away with joy and songs, with timbrel and harp?

28 And you did not allow me to kiss my sons and my daughters. Now you have done foolishly in so doing.

29 It is in my power to do you harm, but the God of your father spoke to me last night, saying, ‘Be careful that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad.’

30 And now you have surely gone because you greatly long for your father’s house, but why did you steal my gods?”

31 Then Jacob answered and said to Laban, “Because I was afraid, for I said, ‘Perhaps you would take your daughters from me by force.’

32 With whomever you find your gods, do not let him live. In the presence of our brethren, identify what I have of yours and take it with you.” For Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them.

Laban would not have killed Rachel for taking the teraphim, in fact, Laban would probably have given Rachel the teraphim had she asked for them. But Laban was frustrated and looking for an excuse to do something to Jacob because Jacob was responsible for Laban being much poorer than he was when Jacob first came to his home. So Laban hung his displeasure with Jacob on the theft of the teraphim, and did everything he could to find them. But Rachel stole the teraphim because she wanted to keep them. And Rachel is her father’s daughter; her father tricked her when he gave Leah to Jacob, so she used her femininity to let her father know that what goes around comes around, as **Genesis 31:34-35** tells us:

34 Now Rachel had taken the household idols, put them in the camel’s saddle, and sat on them. And Laban searched all about the tent but did not find them.

35 And she said to her father, “Let it not displease my lord that I cannot rise before you, for the manner of women is with me.” And [Laban] searched but did not find the household idols.

So Laban couldn’t find the teraphim in Jacob’s possession. Laban couldn’t find any cattle without spots in Jacob’s possession. Laban, the trickster who gave Jacob the wrong daughter, made Jacob work fourteen years for Rachel rather than seven, and removed all the spotted cattle so that Jacob wouldn’t have any cattle from which to start his own flock, saw all his tricks come to naught. Jacob had Rachel, Jacob had the cattle and now Rachel had Laban’s teraphim.

Genesis 31:36-37, 42 tells us:

36 Then Jacob was angry and rebuked Laban, and Jacob answered and said to Laban: “What is my trespass? What is my sin, that you have so



hotly pursued me?

37 Although you have searched all my things, what part of your household things have you found? Set it here before my brethren and your brethren, that they may judge between us both!

42 Unless the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. God has seen my affliction and the labor of my hands, and rebuked you last night.”

But Laban recognized that all he lost to Jacob was ultimately going to the upkeep and maintenance of his daughters and grandchildren. And ultimately, that is why a man works; we are all going to leave the things of this life behind, but we want our sons to be good husbands and our daughters and the grandchildren they bring us to have the proper care of a good husband. In the final analysis, sheep and goats were not Laban’s inheritance; Jacob was Laban’s inheritance, because Jacob was husband to Laban’s daughters and a father to Laban’s grandchildren. So Laban charged Jacob to take care of his inheritance. **Genesis 31:43-50, 55** records:

43 And Laban answered and said to Jacob, “These daughters are my daughters, and these children are my children, and this flock is my flock; all that you see is mine. But what can I do this day to these my daughters or to their children whom they have borne?”

44 Now therefore, come, let us make a covenant, you and I, and let it be a witness between you and me.”

45 So Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar.

46 Then Jacob said to his brethren, “Gather stones.” And they took stones and made a heap, and they ate there on the heap.

48 And Laban said, “This heap is a witness between you and me this day.” Therefore its name was called Galeed,

49 also Mizpah, because he said, “May the LORD watch between you and me when we are absent one from another.

50 If you afflict my daughters, or if you take other wives besides my daughters, although no man is with us—see, God is witness between you and me!”

55 And early in the morning Laban arose, and kissed his sons and daughters and blessed them. Then Laban departed and returned to his place.

Laban went home to rebuild his flock with the few animals that Jacob left him. But Laban secured a good husband for his daughters. And Jacob, in his travels, learned the lesson that cheating his brother Esau taught him. If you treat people fairly, work hard and do that which the Lord tells you to do, it is not necessary to trick anyone.



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When Jesus stood before Pilate, the Jews shouted “Crucify Him”. And Pilate asked the Jews a cogent question. The “a” portion of **Matthew 27:23** records:

23 Then the governor said, “Why, what evil has He done?”

What a question. Jesus came to town healing the sick and raising the dead. Jesus cast out demons and cleansed lepers. Jesus walked three and a half years through the Palestine doing nothing but good. Just as Laban could find no evil in Jacob’s camp, the Jews could point to no evil that Jesus did. But Jesus’ goodness did not matter to the Jews, who continued to shout “Crucify Him, crucify Him”. Pilate was a pagan, a godless Roman, but even he could tell that there was no reason to crucify Jesus Christ.

Sometimes doing good gets you the applause of the crowd. And sometimes it does not. Laban listened to Jacob and left him in peace, but the Jews did not consider Pilate’s question and leave Jesus in peace. **Matthew 27:24-25** records:

24 When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, “I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it.”

25 And all the people answered and said, “His blood be on us and on our children.”

And Jesus Christ shed His Blood. Jesus Christ had all power in heaven and in earth in his hand, but He did not use it; rather, He suffered, bled and He gave His life on the Old Rugged Cross. But Jesus gave His life for His posterity, just as Laban gave his possessions and left Jacob in peace after securing Jacob’s promise to take care of his daughters and grandchildren. Jesus tells us, in **John 10:17-18**

17 “Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.

18 No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.”

So Jesus died, but His death was not the end of the story. Paul tells us, in **Romans 12:19-21**:

19 Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord.

20 Therefore “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.”

21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

God is the power in the universe that is greater than our scheming and our plans. God is the power in the universe that we cannot overcome with our wits. God is the power in the universe that is able to open some wombs and close others, and that can cause speckled, streaked and spotted offspring to come



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from pure white sheep. God is the power in the universe that can repay the evil that we do to one another back to us. The Lord tells us to not avenge ourselves, and Jesus Christ followed that instruction. Jesus Christ laid down his life on the Old Rugged Cross, and by doing so, overcame all of the evil that has even been done. And when Jesus Christ rose from the dead, physically, on that first Easter Sunday Morning, Jesus Christ permanently overcame evil.

In the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, evil lost its power, just as Laban lost his flock. The evil verdict of death given by the Jews was of no effect, because Jesus rose from the dead to overcome evil with good.

Jesus Christ has made a way for us to overcome evil with good, for our sins to be forgiven, for our transgressions to be remembered no more, and for us to have a relationship with the Most High God. What is that way? How are we to do it? We need a change of heart. 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.”

Romans 12:21 tells us:

21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

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