



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 24”

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Informed. Insightful. Intelligent.



The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 24

Proverbs 31:10-11

10 Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies.

11 The heart of her husband safely trusts her; so he will have no lack of gain.

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.

We are departing from our trip through the Bible to discuss the holiday of the day, and we will return to our Biblical travelogue next Sunday.

On this Mother's Day, I find myself conflicted about the celebration. The statistics from the last National Vital Statistics report published by the Centers of Disease Control indicate that, in 2006, there were 4,265,555 births in the US. Of them, 1,641,946, or 38.5%, were to unmarried women. In 2002, the birth rate for unmarried woman was 22.5%, or a 16% increase in four years.

On the one hand, women that have children out of wedlock are in fact mothers, and are eligible for the affection of their children on Mother's Day. On the other hand, the trend towards the acceptance of illegitimacy as a lifestyle is contrary to the teachings of the Bible.

I was involved in a group discussion with some younger people this week, and one of them posted this question to the group: "Which would your mother have preferred, equal custody of the children or child support and why?"

As I read the question, I was speechless for a moment, and I sat cogitating an answer. Finally, I responded: "That's like asking, 'Would you rather have your left hand cut off, or would you rather have your left foot cut off?' Why do I have to have anything cut off?"

Even birds have enough sense to build a nest before they lay eggs. I would have preferred having a mother with the sense to wait to have sex (and babies) until after her wedding ceremony to a man that could carry her over the threshold in his own home because he had one, a man that proved to her father



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that he was mature enough to make the commitment to take care of a wife and family. I would prefer having a mother with the intelligence to know how to keep a man happy; to fix his meals, to provide him a consistent sexual outlet, and to make his house into a home for him and for his children so that he would never have to go outside of his marriage looking for comfort.

So I would have preferred to have a mother that knew how to be a wife and wanted to do so, and a father that wanted to be a husband and knew how to do so. That would be my preference. And it should be hers.”

After reading to my response, the questioner responded: “Well, we know that that would have been great, but in most situations in the real world it doesn't work that way. The question was about what your mother would have chosen to do and why.

In the legal system usually the mother has the choice and preference. And this question speaks volumes about why we make some of the choices we make as parents, not to mention what really is best for our children if our relationship doesn't work.”

Obviously, I was not prepared for this level of negativity over the prospect of having a family, especially as the people with whom I was discussing the question did not see their position as negative, but as normal and realistic. But these young people are part of a generation in which immorality is considered normal and realistic.

So I responded: “In what ‘real world’ do you live? Why does the ‘real world’ have to work this way? When you say ‘real world’ as though immorality should be normalized, you limit your thinking. Maybe that's why you consider immorality the ‘real world’. Try thinking outside of the box.

Now, I could spend time presenting a case for morality, but I can summarize it in one quick, clear verse of Scripture. **Hebrews 13:4** tells us:
4 Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

And Paul tells us, in **Ephesians 5:3-7**:
3 But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints;
4 neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.
5 For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.
6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.
7 Therefore do not be partakers with them.



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For those that are not familiar with the word, fornication is voluntary sexual intercourse between two unmarried persons or two persons not married to each other. And, according to the National Vital Statistics report, 38.5% of the children born in our country are children of fornication, which is one of the reasons that these young people with whom I was conversing see fornication as the norm.

But, my challenge is not simply to point out Biblical facts. The real challenge is to change the thinking of those who have bought into the normalization of deviancy.

And the question about the choices of unwed mothers to either seek child support for their children or forgo that support in order to exclude the child's biological father from their lives brings us to the real responsibility of a mother.

Proverbs 31:10-11 tells us:

10 Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies.

11 The heart of her husband safely trusts her; so he will have no lack of gain.

The relationship between a husband and a wife is the most valuable relationship in the Bible, because the combination of husband and wife are needed to raise children according to God's plan. **Matthew 19:4-6** tells us:

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."

Jesus is quoting the 24th verse of the 2nd chapter of Genesis as He makes this statement. The marital relationship is the foundational relationship in the Bible, and the most precious relationship that we can have. As a matter of fact, God created a wife for man as the completion of man's very being, as God said, 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."

And Paul tells us, in **1Corinthians 11:11**:

11 Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord.

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.

That is why marriage is honorable and fornication and adultery are grounds for judgment.



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It is the plan of God that husband and wife cooperate with one another in the raising of children. One of the reasons that these young people see fornication as the norm and feel sanguine in marginalizing the relationships of a father in the life of their children is that they do not recognize this truth. These young people have not seen successful marital relationships in their own lives and their experience with being a child does not include being involved with a married mother and father, but a single mother. Thus, they are not aware of the role that marriage and fathers are to play in the lives of their children. Other than the physical difference between men and women, they have no concept of the difference in roles between the parents, much like Susan, who was consulting with her counselor.

“I’m having a great deal of trouble with my boyfriend”, began Susan as she began her consultation. “I’m just so attracted to him, but when I stop to think, I wonder if he is really right for me.”

“That’s normal”, replied the Counselor. “There is a difference between men and women, caused by a hormone that women have called oxytocin. At the onset of puberty, women develop the ability to be “bonded” to young men as a function of this hormone, which generates intense feelings of attachment in women that are stimulated. Oxytocin reactions can be stimulated an attractive mental picture or by touch in erogenous zones.

“The bonding caused by this hormone makes females less able to make objective decisions when selecting a mate. And since female selection is largely based upon a hormonal, emotional reaction, romance and “falling in love” are predominately female traits. You almost never hear of a woman leaving a man at the altar, but you hear about men getting cold feet all the time”, continued the Counselor.

“Yeah”, replied Susan, “I’m a lot more romantic than he is.”

“Women almost always are more romantic than men”, said the Counselor, “because of oxytocin.”

“Well”, asked Susan, “how can I know that I’m making a good decision?”

“The best way is to have your father help you make courtship decisions”, said the Counselor.

“Females really need a male protector to help them make objective decisions about a mate. That is the reason for the concept of ‘arranged marriages’ that has existed since Biblical days. That is why that, even today, part of the wedding ceremony involves the father putting his approval on his daughter’s wedding by giving her to her husband. If you have an involved father, by design, he is the one man most capable of ratifying your mate selection and protecting you, because he loves you but doesn’t have a sexual interest in you.”

“You mean that I should ask my father?” asked Susan. “But I’m twenty-seven years old!”

“It doesn’t matter how old you are”, replied the Counselor, “in the best



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case, a young woman should conduct her romantic affairs under the protection of her father from the time she reaches puberty until her father gives her to a man that he thinks is appropriate to be her husband. And her father is the best and most objective person to verify the young man's ability to support her; if the young man does not have sufficient resources or is not emotionally stable enough to take care of her, her father can reject the young man's advances even if the young woman is not emotionally able to do so.

"Your Dad won't be in love with your boyfriend, so he can take the responsibility to objectively ascertain that your young man can take care of a family before he gets access to you. In the days in which the "father-protector" did his job, young men had to pass muster before they could even get a date with a young woman. This kept young women from wasting their time with ne'er-do-wells and motivated young men to work to acquire sufficient resources to get a father's approval.

"If a young man's 'game' is tight enough, he can usually talk a young girl into almost anything, but he can't if her father is overseeing their relationship. Even if she's grown", said the Counselor.

"But what about those girls that don't have a father?" asked Susan.

"Well, they have a problem", said the Counselor. "But maybe they have a grandfather, an uncle or an older brother that they could consult. If there are no men in their family, the chances are good that they will have a problem making a good choice, as we see over and over again in our society. Being in love is important, but an emotional attachment is not a good enough reason to marry."

"And that's the problem with my boyfriend", said Susan, "I love him, but he has problems with money. But I'm working, and I could support us both."

"Well", said the Counselor, "you probably could. But the best marriages work by the division of labor. One brings in the money and the other takes care of the home. And every home needs someone to take care of it. Divorces are more likely to happen when there is no one to take care of the home.

"Suppose you work all day and bring in the money. Is your man going to have dinner ready? Is he going to make the house a home and take care of the children? Are you going to be angry if he doesn't participate as much as you would like?

"Pretty soon, you'll start thinking, 'Why did I get married? I could have stayed single and cleaned up my own apartment and bought myself takeout after working all day. What's the point of married life?' And although you may not realize it, he'll be thinking the same thing.

"And when married life is the same as single life, couples get irritated with each other when challenges occur and they often decide to go back to being single."

The counselor continued, "So, marriage is really more about having a lifestyle partner than a sex partner. After all, how much time in a day do you



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spend having sex? So before you consider getting married, ask yourself what lifestyle you want and then marry someone that wants a similar lifestyle and can provide it for you.

“If you want to raise your own children, make sure that you marry someone that can support you while you do that. If you want to have dinner at home with your husband at 6pm every day and family time in the evening, don’t marry a fireman. If you want to be the breadwinner, don’t marry a man that wants someone to take care of him all the time, because you’ll be too busy. And so on.”

“But suppose I enjoy my job”, said Susan, “should I stop working just because I’m married?”

“Marriage is about lifestyle”, repeated the Counselor. “If you want to be the breadwinner in your family, make sure you make enough bread so that you can hire someone to make your home for you, because someone has to do it. But make sure you hire an older lady, because if you hire a young one, your husband may very well decide that since she is really his wife, he’d rather be with her.”

“You want a career, but your husband will probably want a wife”, continued the Counselor. “Think about it from his point of view. Why would a man marry a woman that is going to be too busy to take care of him and his children? One of the reasons that married men have affairs is because they are married but don’t have wives in a functional sense. So if you really don’t want to live the lifestyle of a wife, there is no reason to get married now. Wait until you do.”

“So your advice is that I should get my dad to help me”, said Susan, “and that I should focus on finding someone that will help me to have the lifestyle I want.”

“That’s correct”, said the Counselor, “Decide what you want, and look for it. 70% of having a good marriage is making the correct choice. You see, problems in life are inevitable. If you have a mature mate that can take care of business and with whom you agree on lifestyle issues, problems will bring the two of you closer as you work together. If you marry an immature person who can’t carry his weight, your problems will drive you apart, and you have a good chance of getting divorced. Your emotional attachment to him may blind you to the facts about him, but ask your dad to guide you.”

“Thanks for the advice”, said Susan.

Think, for a moment, about the care of a baby. A woman can handle a baby, pretty much, all by herself if she has to. Most of the direct functions required by a baby do not require a great deal of physical strength or stamina.

As the child grows and becomes more active, it is valuable to have someone to give you a break from childcare. But, women usually have a large enough support system that they can trade off babysitting or get their mothers or



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sisters to help them. So, even for young children, fathers are still not absolutely required.

But, if you have a female child, puberty will hit one day, and she will be faced with the oxytocin response. She will need a Dad to watch over her and make objective decisions in her best interest as her interest in the opposite sex grows. If a young woman doesn't have an involved father to protect her, she looks for a protector, generally a boyfriend, in her peer group, which is the reason for the continued increase in the birth rate of girls between 15 and 19 years of age in our country.

And if you have a male child, his childhood needs will be similar to those of his sister until he reaches puberty. At puberty, however, he will need to differentiate himself from the female influences in his life in order to begin his manhood development. He needs a father, an alpha male to guide him, and if he does not have a father, he may be able to turn to an available male relative or an athletic coach. On the other hand, he may turn to a gang leader, and ultimately, to a prison guard.

My point is that someone is going to fulfill the role that is designed for the father. The father is the best person to play the role, but someone is going to play it, either for good or for evil. And so, our text, **Proverbs 31:10-11** tells us:

10 Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies.

11 The heart of her husband safely trusts her; so he will have no lack of gain.

An extremely important virtue of a mother is her ability to remain married to her husband to provide a father for her children. Her children need care, her children need nurture, her children need sustenance, but, when they become pubescent, they will need the influence of their father in their lives. **1 Corinthians 11:11** tells us:

11 Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord.

The fact of the matter is that neither gender is independent of the other. Neither gender is superior to the other. On certain days, the mother is more important in the life of the child than is the father, but sooner or later, the days will come when the opposite will be true.

In the plan of God, a woman's primary role is to be a wife. The human being with whom she is to have her greatest allegiance is to be her husband. She is not one flesh with her father, mother, brother, sister, or child. She is one flesh with her husband, who is the partner with whom she is most competent to complete the efficient raising of her child to maturity, not just to puberty.

So on this Mother's Day, we honor all mothers, but let us give a special accolade to those mothers that have fulfilled their roles as wives as well as mothers, and have provided a home, a family life, and an environment for their



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children to flourish and grow, not just in childhood, but through puberty to mature adulthood and ultimately, a role model for picking a competent spouse with which to live and continue their family into the next generation.

Until recently, my favorite movie was “Gladiator”, one in which the protagonist, played by Russell Crowe, gave his life to defeat the wicked Roman emperor. His objective in doing so was to protect Caesar’s grandson, and to return to his wife and son in the afterlife.

But now, I have a new favorite movie. It is, “The Blind Side”, in which Sandra Bullock portrays a suburban mother that adopted a Black teenaged boy with no home. She teamed with the her husband, an athletic coach and a tutor to turn this functionally illiterate young man into a Dean’s List scholar at the University of Mississippi and a first round draft choice in the NFL. And “The Blind Side” movie recounts a true story.

Proverbs 31:26-31 speaks of this type of mother, as it says:

26 She opens her mouth with wisdom, And on her tongue is the law of kindness.

27 She watches over the ways of her household, And does not eat the bread of idleness.

28 Her children rise up and call her blessed; Her husband also, and he praises her:

29 “Many daughters have done well, But you excel them all.”

30 Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, But a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised.

31 Give her of the fruit of her hands, And let her own works praise her in the gates.

Whatever you give a mother, she will make greater. If you give her sperm, she’ll give you a baby. If you give her a house, she’ll give you a home. If you give her groceries, she’ll give you a meal. If you give her a smile, she’ll give you her heart. She multiplies and enlarges that which is given to her.

I know. I was just a little fellow when God gave me to my Mom. We lived upstairs over the beauty shop that she owned on 69th street in Chicago, and she knew we couldn’t play in the street. This was before the days of video games, so she bought us a piano so we would have something to play with in the house. My two brothers and I used to bang on the keys, and then I took a hacksaw to the piano when I figured out how the hacksaw worked.

And although neither of my parents could carry a tune in a bucket, Mom decided that we should learn how to play the piano since we had it in the house. So we did. And she had no musical talent, but she took us all over the country to play in various music competitions. My older brother earned a Ph.D in music, and after being the assistant dean of fine arts at a traditionally Black college for years,



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he is now a dean at the University of Indiana. His choirs have sung at the White House during the Clinton and Obama administrations. And I played the piano so well that my wife bought me one for a wedding present so she could listen to me play. People still love to hear me play right now.

From nothing. No musicians in the family; no musical talent, just Momma telling us that we had to practice and play. She taught us that a half-hour of lessons required seven hours of practice, and now I know that with seven hours of practice a week, I can learn anything.

When I watched “The Blind Side”, I cried because although Sandra Bullock was playing the role, I saw Momma. Making something out of nothing. Nurturing three little boys. Telling us we all had to get college degrees. Making sure that we all got our lessons, both academic and music. Keeping us on the straight and narrow. Although I was playing the organ in a church down the street from Jeff Fort and the Blackstone Rangers, I never once thought about joining the gang, because Momma wouldn’t have it, and neither would Dad.

Momma and Dad’s marriage has been my role model. They were married and in love for over fifty years of working together before Momma heard the steady march of the chariot wheels from the sky. Until her lamp went out, like a vessel not filled with oil. Until her light was extinguished like a flickering candle in the wind. If I ever thought about leaving my wife, I could never do so because I would have to go tell Momma and Dad, and I would rather just stay in my marriage than disappoint Momma. And she taught me that if I stuck to it, and spent seven hours a week working on it, I could learn to do anything and to love anyone.

So, on this Mother’s Day, I salute all of the women that have had the experience of having children in their wombs, and I give a special accolade to those women that have facilitated the training of their children by providing them an intact family, attracting and keeping a husband and providing their children the familial road map that will facilitate their success in maintaining their own family in the next generation. And who faithfully fulfill the role that God gives them, as He instructed, in **Proverbs 22:6**:

6 Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.

Before Jesus was crucified, his disciples all forsook Him and fled. Even Peter, who was the strongest among them, denied Jesus in the very shadow of the Cross. But there was one disciple, John, who was able to stay with Jesus through the entire Passion Experience. And John was able to walk with Jesus as Jesus and Simon of Cyrene, whom the Romans impressed to help Jesus, carried the Cross to Calvary.



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Jesus' female followers were crying around him, but none of the men were able to help or even stay with Jesus, except John. But Jesus had a very special job for John, as **John 19:25-27** tells us:

25 Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

26 When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!"

27 Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home.

Even the Savior of the world recognized the contribution of His mother. She took on the assignment from God to bear Jesus even before she was married, and she was there when Jesus took His last breath. And that's mother love, only surpassed by the love of God, who said, in **John 3:16-17**:

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.

So we thank God for His love, which He manifests to all of us both through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and through the love of the mothers that He gives us all.

Pastor Darryl R. Curtis
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