



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 34”

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Informed. Insightful. Intelligent.



The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 34

Deuteronomy 24:5

5 “When a man has taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war or be charged with any business; he shall be free at home one year, and bring happiness to his wife whom he has taken.

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.

One of the most important attributes that human beings can have is respect. Human relationships break down when one person in a relationship does not respect the other. And this holds true particularly in marital relationships. Paul and Peter give us the paradigm for respectful marital relationships in **Ephesians 5:33** and **1Peter 3:7**:

33 Nevertheless let each one of you [husbands] in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. 7 Husbands, likewise, dwell with [your wives] 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.

God instructed the Israelites as to how to deal with the women to whom they became attracted in the Promised Land. The seven tribes of the Canaanites with which the Israelites were to first come into contact were to be destroyed, but there were people in the Land that lived geographically farther away from the Israelites entrance point into the land than did the seven idolatrous tribes. These people were to be conquered, but not destroyed. **Deuteronomy 20:10-18** told the Israelites:

10 “When you go near a city to fight against it, then proclaim an offer of peace to it.

11 And it shall be that if they accept your offer of peace, and open to you, then all the people who are found in it shall be placed under tribute to you, and serve you.



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12 Now if the city will not make peace with you, but war against you, then you shall besiege it.

13 And when the LORD your God delivers it into your hands, you shall strike every male in it with the edge of the sword.

14 But the women, the little ones, the livestock, and all that is in the city, all its spoil, you shall plunder for yourself; and you shall eat the enemies' plunder which the LORD your God gives you.

15 Thus you shall do to all the cities which are very far from you, which are not of the cities of these nations.

16 "But of the cities of these peoples which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance, you shall let nothing that breathes remain alive,

17 but you shall utterly destroy them: the Hittite and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, just as the LORD your God has commanded you,

18 lest they teach you to do according to all their abominations which they have done for their gods, and you sin against the LORD your God.

God instructed the Israelites the proper way to deal with the women to whom they were attracted in the land of the people that they conquered but did not destroy, in **Deuteronomy 21:10-13**:

10 "When you go out to war against your enemies, and the LORD your God delivers them into your hand, and you take them captive,

11 and you see among the captives a beautiful woman, and desire her and would take her for your wife,

12 then you shall bring her home to your house, and she shall shave her head and trim her nails.

13 She shall put off the clothes of her captivity, remain in your house, and mourn her father and her mother a full month; after that you may go in to her and be her husband, and she shall be your wife.

Seventy people in Israel's family migrated to Egypt when Joseph became the second in command there. At the time of the Exodus, those seventy individuals had been fruitful and multiplied into six hundred thousand men, not counting women and children, over the three hundred years that the Israelites spent in Egypt. It is intuitively obvious, and a cursory reading of the Pentateuch makes it explicit, that there was intermarriage between the Israelites and the Egyptians during that time.

God desired that Israel remain religiously pure, but not ethnically pure. God anticipated that there would be intermarriage between the Israelites and the inhabitants of the Promised Land that the Israelites were not to destroy, and in the passage of Scripture that we just read, God instructed the Israelites to give their captives both time and ceremonies to adjust to their new reality.

In many cultures, the ceremony that women from conquered lands had to undergo to become part of the new culture was rape by the warriors that



conquered their land. But not so in Israel. God did not allow rape; God commanded that the Israelites treat the women of conquered cultures with respect.

Divesting a woman of her fingernails and her hair was a powerful symbolic ceremony which did not violate the woman's person but helped her adjust to the fact that her reality was completely changed. It is certainly an adjustment for a woman to have her hair cut off involuntarily. Paul tells us, in **1Corinthians 11:15: 15 But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given to her for a covering.**

But the month of mourning prescribed by God simultaneously gave the woman the time to adjust to the reality of her new situation and to allow her hair and fingernails to grow back to their normal lengths. God acknowledged the tie between the woman and her family of origin, as the woman was to use that month to grieve them. Finally, after the completion of her mourning and her physical adjustment, God then gave the man permission to have sex with the woman, albeit not to rape her, but to marry her, making her part of his family. As our takeaway point says, God has designed man as the cooperative coalition of husband and wife. Other than in those situations in which God commands nations to be utterly destroyed, God does not design situations in which men brutalize women, either sexually or martially. God intends that any relationship between a man and a woman is to be one of mutual respect.

The only sexual relationship between a man and woman that shows a man's respect for a woman is marriage. When a man has a sexual liaison with a woman to whom he is not committed, he is treating the woman as a whore, and God does not want his chosen people to participate in whoredom.

Since God gave men permission to divorce wives that did not please them, God also gave men the responsibility to make sure that their wives had every opportunity to please them. A man could not just marry a wife, have sex with her and then divorce her because she wasn't pleasing. Our text,

Deuteronomy 24:5 tells us:

5 "When a man has taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war or be charged with any business; he shall be free at home one year, and bring happiness to his wife whom he has taken.

The initial responsibility to provide marital happiness is the responsibility of the man. For the first year of his marriage, the man is to focus on his wife's needs and desires in order to bring her happiness. In the normative case, a woman primarily needs and desires attention and affection from her husband, and God relieves the man from all other responsibility in order to enable the man to meet this need.

In the best case scenario, the wife was a virgin. Thus, even if the man was sexually experienced before marriage, generally speaking, his experiences prepared him to please himself sexually, but not necessarily to please a woman



sexually. Even if the man had pleased a woman in his extra-marital sexual experiences, the unique nature of women makes it likely that that which would please one woman might not please another.

Now, proficiency at sexuality, like any other physical activity, is, to some degree, a matter of practice. And since marital sex requires practice to be mutually satisfying and men are generally more easily sexually satisfied, God put the onus on the man to take the time necessary to ascertain the techniques most pleasing to his wife and become accomplished at them, even if it took as long as a year of constant study to figure out the right combination of events and actions.

If, however, a man found a year of endeavoring to please a woman was ineffective, the Jewish leaders gave the man leave to move on. **Deuteronomy 24:1** says:

1 “When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house.

The word uncleanness means indecency, literally, the nakedness of a thing. But the Jews took this literal definition and changed it colloquially into anything with which a husband took issue. And most husbands would find a chronically disappointed wife to be indecent and a candidate for divorce. But when questioned by the Jews, Jesus restored the definition to that which the Bible meant originally, as **Matthew 19:7-9** tells us:

7 They said to [Jesus], “Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?”

8 [Jesus] said to them, “Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.

9 And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.”

But, even after the month of preparation and the year of practice, a foreign woman could refuse to adjust to the reality of her new husband, even though she had no way to return to her old reality. And God specified that if the man that captured her did not find her pleasing as he anticipated that he would, he could divorce her, but he could not mistreat her. The man had the responsibility to continue to treat her with respect. **Deuteronomy 21:14** tells us:

14 And it shall be, if you have no delight in her, then you shall set her free, but you certainly shall not sell her for money; you shall not treat her brutally, because you have humbled her.

God specified that a woman married to a man and then discarded by him is humiliated. God acknowledges the woman’s humiliation in the treatment that He commands for the woman so used, and underscores the commitment required by marriage.



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Marriage is a man's commitment to a woman. If the man decides to terminate the marriage, he ought not treat the woman badly while dissolving his commitment. At the very least, the woman ought be free and unencumbered by the dissolved relationship and the man ought have no say over the woman's future situation.

Alternatively, during this time in which God allowed polygamy, it is possible that the man had a prior wife, and the new marriage to the foreign woman might be more satisfying than the man's marriage to his first wife. God did not allow a man to repudiate his obligation to his first wife simply because he found his wife acquired in battle more pleasing. The succeeding verses, **Deuteronomy 21:15-17**, tell us:

15 "If a man has two wives, one loved and the other unloved, and they have borne him children, both the loved and the unloved, and if the firstborn son is of her who is unloved,

16 then it shall be, on the day he bequeaths his possessions to his sons, that he must not bestow firstborn status on the son of the loved wife in preference to the son of the unloved, the true firstborn.

17 But he shall acknowledge the son of the unloved wife as the firstborn by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn is his.

The tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh in Israel exist in violations of this commandment. Israel had two wives, Rachel, whom he loved, and Leah, Rachel's older sister whom Israel received from their father Laban by trickery. Since Rachel had the love of her husband while Leah did not, God gave Leah the love of children to make up for the inequity while making Rachel infertile to deny her that mother/child bonding relationship. Leah bore six children by Israel before God relented and allowed Rachel to have a son, Joseph.

Each of Israel's sons by Leah is the father of a tribe in the nation of Israel. But Israel counted Joseph, the firstborn son of the wife that he loved, as his firstborn son, and when the tribes were allocated, Joseph received the double portion normally allotted to the firstborn son. There is no tribe of Joseph, but since Joseph had two sons and Israel made each of Joseph's sons the father of a tribe, Joseph is the father of two tribes, and thus, he has a double portion of the inheritance in the Land.

But God tells the Israelites that they are not to duplicate the situation of Joseph's two sons Ephraim and Manasseh. The double portion of the inheritance was to go to the son that was born first chronologically, not born first to the favorite wife. If a man marries an Israelite woman and then a woman that he captured in war, the firstborn child, which would logically come from the Israelite woman, since the man spent a year making her happy first.

Of course, the complications of polygamy were not in the initial plan of God. Jesus gives us the initial and final plan of God in **Matthew 19:3-6, 9**, which



says:

3 The Pharisees also came to [Jesus], testing Him, and saying to Him, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?”

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.”

9 And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.”

But the disciples, who held to the Jewish thought on marriage, opposed Jesus’ teaching, in **Matthew 19:10:**

10 [Jesus’] disciples said to Him, “If such is the case of the man with his wife, it is better not to marry.”

God gave the Jews the commandment that a married couple should take a year of constant attention to one another to create marital fulfillment, but the disciples postulated, from experience, that even a whole year of constant attention was no guarantee that the relationship would remain mutually fulfilling into perpetuity. After the year, a man might reach a temporary state of fulfillment with a woman, but the volatility of the female psyche and the trials and tribulations of life were likely to upset that state of fulfillment and cause the husband to become frustrated with the dissatisfaction of his wife. And there is nothing to which a married man wants less to be exposed than a dissatisfied woman. Solomon, the wisest man that ever lived and one that probably had the most experience with marriage, goes to great length to tell us, in **Proverbs 21:9, 19, 27:15-16, 30:21, 23:**

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

19 Better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and angry woman.

15 A continual dripping on a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike;

16 Whoever restrains her restrains the wind, and grasps oil with his right hand.

21 For three things the earth is perturbed, Yes, for four it cannot bear up:

23 A hateful woman when she is married, And a maidservant who succeeds her mistress.

Jesus, who was wiser than Solomon, was not ignorant of this situation. The year of constant attention is intended to create a foundation, but after that year, the marital building itself is still yet to be built. And to build the marital



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building requires both longevity and commitment; events will occur that will make construction difficult, but the building can only be completed by determined long-term commitment. Not only that, but the husband and wife are only part of the building that was being built.

The prime directive from God is given in **Genesis 1:28**:

28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

Fruitful multiplication, which is the real content of the marital building, includes children, and the psyche of future generations relies on the commitment of their parents. Even in our society, sociologists tell us that children do less well, both psychologically and economically, when their parents are not married to one another than they do in situations in which their parents are married. As a matter of fact, the familial situation that is most conducive to economic advancement is the nuclear family.

So, Jesus tells the disciples that the purpose of sexual fulfillment in marriage is the production of a familial situation in keeping with the prime directive to increase and multiply, thus personal fulfillment is not the real point of marriage, but is rather a byproduct of the well being of the children produced. And Jesus commands that those that choose to focus on personal fulfillment rather than the well being of children be denied the opportunity to engage in the activity that produces children, since their familial priorities are incorrect.

Matthew 19:11-12 tells us:

11 But [Jesus] said to them, “All cannot accept this saying, but only those to whom it has been given:

12 For there are eunuchs who were born thus from their mother’s womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake. He who is able to accept it, let him accept it.”

Jesus’ reference to eunuchs after the disciples’ statement that it is better not to marry if they cannot divorce leads to the conclusion that Jesus is saying that choosing not to embrace longevity in marriage is tantamount to choosing to forgo having sex period.

I was walking through a church parking lot this week, and I happened to see an unmarried woman with whom I was acquainted with whom I had not conversed for some time. She told me about the problem that she was having with convincing her fourteen year old adopted daughter, who reached puberty and was physically developing into a young woman, to maintain her virginity.

I pointed out the difficulty built into her situation, as she did not have a father figure to protect her adopted daughter. Not only that, but her daughter was being tempted into sexual activity, not just by the boys in her peer group that wanted sexual access to her, but more destructively, by the girls in her peer



group that were already sexual and wanted her to conform. Any girl in that peer group that maintained her virginity cast a negative light on those that had already surrendered theirs, and the young women that surrendered did not want the light from the virgins shining on them.

The woman mentioned to me that she spent a great deal of time talking to her daughter, but was somewhat frustrated by their conversations. When she mentioned the health class in which her daughter was enrolled that was taught by the school system, I advised her that this class, rather than supporting her position, was probably a major source of her trouble.

“Just think about it.” I advised. “Why should young girls participate in a class to learn sexual techniques when they are not supposed to be having sex? How does learning sexual techniques help young women maintain abstinence?”

“Children are generally encouraged to do everything that they learn”, I continued. “When I learned how to read, my parents took me to the library to take out books to read, and demanded that I read them. When I learned how to write, my parents made me write book reports on the books that I learned to read. When I learned how to figure, my parents made me figure out the correct change at the store. I was not allowed to take drivers’ training until I was old enough to get a learner’s permit and drive the car.

“But my parents never taught me the mechanics of sex, nor did they allow the school system to do so. Why? My parents did not want me to practice sexual techniques. My parents taught me the mechanics of abstinence rather than the mechanics of sex, because abstinence was that which they wanted me to practice.

“Your daughter has probably been in sex education class for at least a couple of years, which is why she and her peers are preoccupied with experiencing sexuality just as anyone would be preoccupied with doing that which they are being taught. So, she’s interested in sex because she’s learning about it in school. And when she starts high school next year, she’ll be learning advanced techniques.”

My friends’ eyes were getting wider and wider as I spoke, and when I mentioned advanced techniques, she began to look truly panicked.

“Of course she’s going to learn advanced techniques”, I responded. “She’s already had the basics. How many times can they repeat the same information? When you get to high school, you take algebra, not addition.

“So when you try to impress Christian principles about sex on her, you are directly flying in the face of that which she is learning in school. And children generally accept the most lenient authority figure as their guide. So if you tell them not to do something and the schools tell them to do it, whose leadership do you think that she is going to follow?”

“It would probably behoove you to get her out of that environment, and if she asks why, quote **Deuteronomy 24:5** to her:



5 “When a man has taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war or be charged with any business; he shall be free at home one year, and bring happiness to his wife whom he has taken.

“Tell her that her time to learn about and experience sexuality is when she is married and she has a husband whose responsibility it is to make sure that she enjoys the experience. Sexual satisfaction is a much more complex experience for women than it is for men, and the boys with whom she is in contact have neither the time nor the environment in which they can experiment long enough to find out that which she truly enjoys. Not only that, but female sexual satisfaction requires a certain amount of privacy, security and leisure, and her sexual activity with them will be covert, surreptitious and probably rushed, as they will have to worry about being interrupted and disciplined by a parent or another authority figure. Once she is married, however, her husband will be able to provide privacy, an environment in which they can experiment at leisure and one in which she does not have to worry about seeing her naked picture on Facebook or Youtube.

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.”

No young man that truly loves a young woman would subject her to the indignity of illicit sexual relations. In the first part of the Biblical definition of love, Paul tells us in **1Corinthians 13:4**:

4 Love is patient and kind.

A young man that is patient and kind waits for the proper time to make the relationship with his young woman physical. He waits until he can create the proper environment to allow his mate to relax and learn how she can best experience satisfaction from intimacy. And the three components of such a relationship are commitment, shown by marriage, along with leisure time and privacy, which allows the couple to experiment at leisure.

Jesus, although He was never married, provides us with the example. Jesus had the power to change water into wine, to get cash money from the mouths of fish, open the eyes of the blind, heal the sick and raise the dead. If anyone had that which was required to make himself the ruler of the whole world, it was Jesus the Christ. And when Jesus entered Jerusalem during the fateful Passover week, the multitudes hailed Him as the Messiah, the Holy One and the chosen One of Israel.

And Jesus was. Jesus could easily have established a Kingdom on Earth as a function of his great power. Jesus embarrassed His opposition in debate, and could have completely dethroned them with a word. Jesus could have



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singlehandedly defeated the Roman army with the ease that David defeated Goliath.

Yes, Jesus had all power, and He could have used it to bring Himself a great deal of power. But Jesus chose not to. Why? Because just as a young man ought be patient enough to create the proper environment for his mate, Jesus was patient enough to create the proper environment for His Kingdom.

There was an event in which God commanded Jesus to participate before he could proclaim His Kingdom. Jesus told His disciples, in **Matthew 16:21, 24-27**:

21 From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.

24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

25 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

27 For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.

Jesus told Pilate, in **John 18:36**:

36 Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.”

Jesus did not act prematurely to establish an earthly Kingdom for Himself, although an earthly kingdom would have been easy for Jesus to establish and would have saved Him a great deal of pain and agony. But Jesus chose to suffer through the God ordained process of His Crucifixion and Resurrection from the dead, so that Peter could tell us, in **1Peter 4:1-2**:

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.

Our marital relations are intended to be a reflection of our faith in Christ, and our ability to persevere to do the will of God. So let us maintain ourselves in the manner that the Lord commands us and teach our children to do so, as Paul tells us, in **1Thessalonians 4:3-8**:

3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality;

4 that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,



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**5 not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God;
6 that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified.**

7 For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.

8 Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.

Let us persevere and not reject God, but rather keep our commitment to love one another even as Christ has loved us.

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