



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

# “The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 44”

September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2010  
Pastor Darryl R. Curtis

Family Life Baptist Church  
909 West Saginaw Street  
Lansing, Michigan 48915  
Phone: (517) 393-9399  
Email: [info@familylifebc.com](mailto:info@familylifebc.com)  
Website: <http://www.familylifebc.com>

***Informed. Insightful. Intelligent.***



### The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 44

#### Ruth 3:12–13

**12 Now it is true that I am a close relative; however, there is a relative closer than I.**

**13 Stay this night, and in the morning it shall be that if he will perform the duty of a close relative for you—good; let him do it. But if he does not want to perform the duty for you, then I will perform the duty for you, as the LORD lives! Lie down until morning.”**

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.

Here is a short background of the book of Ruth. Elimelech, a Jewish farmer living in Bethlehem, moved his wife Naomi and their two sons to Moab during a famine. While the family was in Moab, the sons grew to maturity and then Elimelech died. His sons then married Moabite women. Ten years later, both sons died, and their mother Naomi was left without a husband or sons, but with her two daughters-in-law.

At this point, Naomi had nothing to hold her in Moab, and decided to return home to her family in Bethlehem. She told her two daughters-in-law that they would have better chances finding a husband among their relatives in Moab, and one of the young women agreed with her and stayed in Moab. The other daughter-in-law, Ruth, had been influenced to develop faith in God, and decided to accompany her mother-in-law to Israel to continue to grow in grace and the knowledge of God.

So Naomi returned to Bethlehem penniless and depressed. Ruth accompanied Naomi, and the sad story of the return of the two of them was a source of conversation for the women of the town.

Ruth decided to take up the trade by which the Lord made provisions for widows. **Leviticus 23:22 and Deuteronomy 24:21** tells Israelite farmers: **22 ‘When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field when you reap, nor shall you gather any gleaning from**



**your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger: I am the LORD your God.’ ”**

**21 When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not glean it afterward; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.**

So, Ruth asked Naomi for permission to glean, to follow the harvesters gathering grain in the field so that she could pick up their leavings. Naomi gave Ruth permission, and then God providentially steered Ruth to the farm of Boaz, who was a relative of Elimelech. Ruth began gleaning in the field in the morning, and then, as lunchtime approached, Boaz came to his field to oversee his operation.

Boaz noticed Ruth and asked about her, and was informed that Ruth was the daughter-in-law of Naomi who had recently returned to Bethlehem after a twenty-year absence. Boaz was related to Elimelech, Naomi’s husband, and so he decided to look after Ruth and Naomi by instructing the harvesters to intentionally leave grain available for Ruth to pick up, rather than making her rummage through the leavings.

Because of Boaz’s instructions and Ruth’s hard work, Ruth was able to bring home about ten times the normal amount of grain that a gleaner would be able to gather. When Naomi saw the amount that Ruth brought home, she recognized that Ruth’s gleaning was extraordinary. When Ruth told Naomi that Boaz was her benefactor Boaz, Naomi told Ruth that they were related, and concurred with Boaz’s instructions to Ruth to stay in Boaz’s field so that Ruth could gather as much as possible.

At the conclusion of the harvest, Naomi considered that Ruth would be more secure if she applied for a Levirate marriage with Boaz, as **Deuteronomy 25:5-6** instructed her:

**5 “If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be married to a stranger outside the [husband’s] family; her husband’s brother shall go in to her, take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband’s brother to her.**

**6 And it shall be that the firstborn son which she bears will succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel.**

The provisions of the law further says that if the husband does not have a living brother, that the nearest relative is responsible for the widow. Naomi could not apply for the Levirate marriage, because she had had a son, but Ruth had no children, so Naomi told Ruth to apply to Boaz, in **Ruth 3:2-4**:

**2 Now Boaz, whose young women you were with, is he not our relative? In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor.**

**3 Therefore wash yourself and anoint yourself, put on your best garment and go down to the threshing floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking.**

**4 Then it shall be, when he lies down, that you shall notice the place where**



**he lies; and you shall go in, uncover his feet, and lie down; and he will tell you what you should do.”**

Ruth followed her mother-in-law's instructions, went to the threshing floor and avoided Boaz until the threshing and the meal were over and the night had fully fallen. Then, in the dark, at midnight, Ruth awoke Boaz by lying down at his feet. **Ruth 3:8-9** records:

**8 Now it happened at midnight that the man [Boaz] was startled, and turned himself; and there, a woman was lying at his feet.**

**9 And [Boaz] said, “Who are you?” So [Ruth] answered, “I am Ruth, your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a close relative.”**

Both Ruth and Boaz were familiar with Levirate marriage and the language that Ruth was using. The Scripture indicates that during the time that Boaz observed Ruth in the field, Boaz investigated the possibility of marrying Ruth.

Ruth was hard working, as she both gathered and threshed the grain that Boaz made available to her by herself, without the benefit of the servants and the animals that Boaz used to separate the grain from the stalks. And Ruth spent her time between working in the field and taking care of her mother-in-law, which was fitting for a younger widow living with and taking care of an older widow, and showed her faithful nature. Ruth did not make herself available for any type of non-Scriptural or immoral relationship with the men of the town, which showed her virtuous nature. The Scripture admonished widows, in the “a” portion of **Deuteronomy 25:5**:

**5 “If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be married to a stranger outside the [husband’s] family;**

Thus, for Ruth to seek a relationship outside of the family would be acting contrary to the Scripture.

And this hard-working, faithful and virtuous Ruth was worthy of notice. Boaz noticed Ruth when he first came into the field and saw her working, before he found out that Ruth was the widow of a near kinsman's son. **Proverbs 31:10-12** 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.**

**12 She does him good and not evil all the days of her life.**

God tells us, 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.”**

**Proverbs 31:10-12** defines **Genesis 2:18** in more specific terms. The purpose of marriage, from a Biblical standpoint, is for a man to obtain a female



## FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

helper that he can count on to do him good, not evil, and to meet his relationship needs for the rest of their lives. Ruth fit the criterion to do these things for Boaz, but Boaz could not immediately agree to marry Ruth. Boaz told Ruth, in **Ruth 3:12–13**:

**12 Now it is true that I am a close relative; however, there is a relative closer than I.**

**13 Stay this night, and in the morning it shall be that if he will perform the duty of a close relative for you—good; let him do it. But if he does not want to perform the duty for you, then I will perform the duty for you, as the LORD lives! Lie down until morning.”**

I find it worthy of mention that, interestingly, that the marital relationship is not intended by God to be a relationship that is initiated because of emotion. Levirate marriage was not based upon any emotional attachment between the two parties, but rather, on an objective familial relationship. In this particular case that the Bible gives us as an example, Boaz made it clear that, despite his personal feelings of attachment to Ruth, he would not interfere with a marriage between Ruth and the relative that was nearer in kinship to Elimelech than was he if that relative desired to redeem Elimelech's inheritance.

My point is that, when making a marriage decision, an objective evaluation of Biblical criteria is more important than an emotional attachment, because, generally speaking, mature people have the capacity to develop the necessary emotional attachment with any objectively suitable person, simply by establishing the marital relationship and performing the actions associated with the relationship. In point of fact, the emotional feeling that we term as “love” can be developed as a function of interaction, and does not have to exist prior to the marriage of the two objectively suitable people. This is the fundamental psychology of that which we know as “arranged marriages”. God Himself arranged the first marriage between Adam and Eve in the Garden, and the Old Testament is full of episodes in which the marriages were arranged rather than emotionally based.

Thus, we have a better chance for longevity in marriage when our marriage is objectively suitable, and we allow the emotional attachment to develop as a function of proximity. In other words, being “in love” is not a sufficient reason to pursue a marital relationship, especially if the people that are “in love” with one another are unsuitable for one another because of an objective reason. And Boaz could not marry Ruth, regardless of their attraction, because there was a kinsman that was nearer to Elimelech than Boaz.

As an example of an objective criteria, God commands believers, in **2Corinthians 6:14–18**:

**14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?**



**15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?**

**16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.”**

**17 Therefore “Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.”**

**18 “I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty.”**

It is statistically true that the more points of objective congruence that the lifestyles of marital partners have, the more likely that their marriage will remain strong, or, as the saying goes, birds of a feather flock together. And for those to whom religion is important, religion is an activity in which a great deal of overlap between husband and wife is required, especially when children come into the picture and the parents are charged, as **Proverbs 22:6** records:

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

When marital partners do not agree on the moral and religious standards that they wish to instill into their children, the pressures on the marriage become almost unbearable. The manner in which we instruct and interact with our children is of the utmost importance to most people.

In our generation, the emotional attachment that we call love is considered to be the most important attribute leading people to join their lives together in marriage. People tend to resist recognizing that they are objectively unsuitable because, in our generation, we have been raised to seek the emotional gratification of subjective romantic attraction.

But God makes it clear that subjective romantic attraction is useless if the objective criterion are not met. And although Boaz showed the requisite restraint with Ruth, we find that we ignore the objective criterion at our peril, because feelings are not facts and emotion lacks longevity. As an example, **2Samuel 13:1–2** tells us:

**1 After this Absalom the son of [King] David had a lovely sister, whose name was Tamar; and Amnon the son of David [by another woman] loved [Tamar].**

**2 Amnon was so distressed over his [half-]sister Tamar that he became sick; for she was a virgin. And it was improper for Amnon to do anything to her.**

Why was it objectively improper for Amnon to court Tamar? **Leviticus 18:11** tells us:

**11 The nakedness of your father’s wife’s daughter, begotten by your father—she is your sister—you shall not uncover her nakedness.**



## FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

So, we see the objective prohibition of God keeping these two apart. The episode continues, in **2Samuel 13:3–5**:

**3 But Amnon had a friend whose name was Jonadab the son of Shimeah, David’s brother. Now Jonadab was a very crafty man.**

**4 And [Jonadab] said to [Amnon] “Why are you, the king’s son, becoming thinner day after day? Will you not tell me?” Amnon said to him, “I love Tamar, my brother Absalom’s sister.”**

**5 So Jonadab said to him, “Lie down on your bed and pretend to be ill. And when your father comes to see you, say to him, ‘Please let my sister Tamar come and give me food, and prepare the food in my sight, that I may see it and eat it from her hand.’ ”**

Amnon did as Jonadab suggested, and King David sent Tamar to Amnon with the instructions to prepare Amnon some food. **2Samuel 13:11–14** records:

**11 Now when [Tamar] had brought [the food] to [Amnon] to eat, [Amnon] took hold of [Tamar] and said to her, “Come, lie with me, my sister.”**

**12 But [Tamar] answered him, “No, my brother, do not force me, for no such thing should be done in Israel. Do not do this disgraceful thing!**

**13 And I, where could I take my shame? And as for you, you would be like one of the fools in Israel. Now therefore, please speak to the king; for he will not withhold me from you.”**

**14 However, [Amnon] would not heed her voice; and being stronger than she, he forced her and lay with her.**

So Amnon consummated the relationship that he wanted to have with Tamar, based upon the emotion that he felt for her and the beauty that he saw in her. However, emotion doesn’t necessarily last, charm is fleeting and beauty is vain. **2Samuel 13:15-17** continues:

**15 Then Amnon hated [Tamar] exceedingly, so that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her. And Amnon said to her, “Arise, be gone!”**

**16 So [Tamar] said to him, “No, indeed! This evil of sending me away is worse than the other that you did to me.” But [Amnon] would not listen to her.**

**17 Then [Amnon] called his servant who attended him, and said, “Here! Put this woman out, away from me, and bolt the door behind her.”**

You see, men rejecting women after having out-of-wedlock sex with them didn’t just start in 1972. The act of men having sex with objectively inappropriate women and then rejecting them has been going on for a long time. In this particular case, Tamar had a protector. Absalom, Tamar’s full brother, schemed to take revenge on Amnon and eventually killed him.

But, my point is that in order for relationships to be correct, they must meet the objective criterion first, and the subjective criterion can follow. And understand, when I say “objective criterion”, I mean those criteria that are set



## FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

down by God Himself, in His Word. Regardless of the depth of emotion that Amnon felt for Tamar, she was objectively inappropriate for him, for the reasons stated.

So, when I speak of objective criteria, I'm not talking about racial or cultural prejudice, but only about those things that God tells us in His Word. We spent some time during our discussion of last week verifying that to marry a divorced person actually puts us in danger of committing adultery, as Jesus says in **Mark 10:11–12**:

**11 So [Jesus] said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her.**

**12 And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.”**

And God's admonition against marrying a divorced person is objective, not arbitrary. A divorced person, generally speaking, is divorced for a reason.

Just think about the joy and bonding that occurs between a couple that marries in our generation. The couple experiences the positive emotions that go along with courtship, and they are attracted to one another to the point that they decide that they want their intimacy to become both consistent and physical. In our culture, men and women generally do not marry unless they truly enjoy one another's company. But Jesus clarifies, in **Matthew 19:8–9**:

**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.”**

Divorce occurs because of the hardness of someone's heart. Understand the sequence; first the person experiences the positive emotions of courtship, and then, once the relationship leaves the courtship stage and moves into the stage that requires commitment, the hearts of one or both of the parties hardens for some reason. **2Samuel 13:15** tells us:

**15 Then Amnon hated [Tamar] exceedingly, so that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her. And Amnon said to her, “Arise, be gone!”**

People can best be evaluated by that which they do, rather than that which they say. Amnon did not actually want a relationship with Tamar. Amnon wanted an experience with Tamar. You can have an experience with someone quickly, as Amnon did with Tamar, but to have a relationship requires a significant commitment of time and interpersonal growth. But once Amnon experienced Tamar and the experience did not meet his expectation, Amnon's heart became hardened against Tamar.

Amnon would obviously not be a good prospect for marriage; how could a woman ever tell whether Amnon was giving her his heart or whether his affection





## FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

for her was simply based upon his desire for a sexual relationship, after which Amnon's heart would harden, as it did with Tamar?

A divorced person can similarly be evaluated by their history rather than their word, because a divorced person has voluntarily chosen to break their word, given in their marriage vow, to persevere through better or worse, richer or poorer, sickness and health, all six being conditions through which a married person may have to endure. The divorced person made the commitment, but did not follow through when the chips were down to continue the relationship.

It is rare that only one party in a marriage is responsible for the level of deterioration of the relationship required for a divorce. Let me say that again, because it is a difficult truth for people to hear.

It is rare that only one party in a marriage is responsible for the level of deterioration of the relationship required for a divorce.

This is a difficult truth to hear because we all have the emotional ability to internally rationalize and then excuse that which we do to hurt our marital situation. Our rationalization is that our partner struck the first blow and thus we have the right to retaliate. We tell ourselves that if our partner had not performed the negative action which they did, then we would not have performed the negative action with which we retaliated. Thus, our partner is at fault and we are simply defending ourselves. But Jesus anticipated our thinking on this matter, and tells us, in **Matthew 5:38–39**:

**38 “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’**

**39 But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.**

Jesus goes on to say, in **Matthew 5:43–48**:

**43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’**

**44 But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,**

**45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.**

**46 For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?**

**47 And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so?**

**48 Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.**



## FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

And we Christians would endeavor to apply these principles to strangers, but somehow forget that these principles apply most importantly in our very own homes with the people to whom we have vowed, to God, to support, for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health. Jesus' apostle Peter tells us that these principles apply especially to those with whom we have a relationship, **1Peter 4:1–2, 8** records:

**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.**

**8 And above all things have fervent love for one another, for “love will cover a multitude of sins.”**

Jesus Christ suffered in the flesh for those with whom He had a close relationship. Jesus Christ commanded His disciples to preach throughout the world, but before Jesus gave the disciples that commandment, Jesus came and preached to the disciples themselves, giving them the opportunity to repent of the sins that they committed against Him. Jesus' disciples betrayed Him, forsook Him and denied Him, in the very shadow of the Cross, but Jesus did not cast them away. Jesus prayed, in **John 17:12**

**12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.**

In order to have longevity in marriage, in order for us to keep one another, even as Jesus is keeping us, fervent love is required as Peter tells us, because in marriage, and in any close relationship, even the relationship that Jesus had with His disciples, we are going to sin against one another a multitude of times, because we are all sinners. But that great apostle John, who followed Jesus to the very foot of the Cross and watched as Jesus hung His head in the locks on His shoulder and died, tells us, in **1John 4:11**:

**11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.**

As Jesus tells us, 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.**

Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. And this love is not born of emotion, but of volition, of will. This love is not born of attachment and attraction, but of obligation. This love is not led by emotion, but the loving emotion is given to us as a reward for completing the loving activity to which we obligate ourselves.



## FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

Jesus came into the world as a sacrifice, one that would give Himself so that others could be forgiven of their sins and not condemned for their sin. So, in following the example of Jesus, we have to give ourselves for one another and not condemn one another for sinning, but rather, love one another into walking, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. As the Apostle Paul tells us, in **Romans 8:1–6**:

**1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.**  
**2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.**  
**3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,**  
**4 that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.**  
**5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.**  
**6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.**

Amnon was carnally minded. He did not love his half-sister Tamar, but simply wanted her carnally. He took her, and died as a result.

But although Boaz was attracted to Ruth, Boaz loved God more than he loved Ruth, and was willing to walk spiritually according to that which God told him, following God's objective criterion in order to obtain the result, not that he wanted, but that God wanted for him. Boaz told Ruth, in **Ruth 3:12–13**:

**12 Now it is true that I am a close relative; however, there is a relative closer than I.**  
**13 Stay this night, and in the morning it shall be that if he will perform the duty of a close relative for you—good; let him do it. But if he does not want to perform the duty for you, then I will perform the duty for you, as the LORD lives! Lie down until morning.”**

So let us emulate the example of Boaz, and apply the relationship standard that the Lord gives us objectively, regardless of our feelings on the matter. We may suffer in our relationships; we may have to turn the other cheek and go the extra mile as we follow the Lord, but Jesus tells us, in **Revelation 2:10**:

**10 Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.**



## FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

And as bad as things may appear to be in our lives, they are not as bad as they were on the Cross. So let us be faithful until death, that we might receive the crown of life.

Pastor Darryl R. Curtis  
Family Life Baptist Church