



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 48”

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Informed. Insightful. Intelligent.



The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 48

1Samuel 1:11

11 And [Hannah] made a vow, saying, “O LORD Almighty, if you will only look upon your servant’s misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head.”

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.

This episode in 1Samuel chronicles the bigamous marriage of Hannah and Elkanah. Elkanah while being married to Hannah, has another wife named Peninnah. Hannah and Peninnah, having to share a husband involuntarily, do not exactly get along.

Hannah feels that she is in the “one down” position in her rivalry with Peninnah because Hannah has not been able to get pregnant, but Peninnah has had several children by Elkanah. Hannah cannot blame her barrenness on Elkanah, because, of his two wives, Hannah is his favorite and receives most of his attention. But since Elkanah has been able to impregnate Peninnah repeatedly, Hannah can not logically blame Elkanah for her barrenness.

Elkanah shows his favoritism for Hannah when he allocates meat for the sacrificial dinner to his wives and children. Elkanah gives Hannah a portion that is twice as large as the portion that he gives anyone else, including Peninnah. But Elkanah’s attempt to make Hannah feel better is useless; the love of her husband has no bearing on Hannah’s discontent nor does it offset the taunting of Peninnah towards Hannah. Hannah wants a child, both because she is a woman of childbearing age, and her rival Peninnah taunts her about her barrenness.

Regardless of the amount of love that her husband shows for her, his love does not satisfy her situation. **1Samuel 1:8–10** tells us:



8 Elkanah her husband would say to her, “Hannah, why are you weeping? Why don’t you eat? Why are you downhearted? Don’t I mean more to you than ten sons?”

9 Once when they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah stood up. Now Eli the priest was sitting on a chair by the doorpost of the LORD’s temple.

10 In bitterness of soul Hannah wept much and prayed to the LORD.

Elkanah is trying, but he is incapable of comforting Hannah. But let us switch subjects for a moment.

As I have often said in this series, the Biblical paradigm for marriage is monogamy, but young women often are faced with that which they consider to be a paradoxical situation. On the one hand, young women want a monogamous relationship with a faithful spouse, which requires the patience to wait for the right spouse to approach them and propose marriage. On the other hand, young women have to deal with the internal desire and the societal problem of peer pressure to have a relationship with a man, NOW!

I talked, a couple of lessons ago, about the Romeo and Juliet complex, in which two young people that were objectively inappropriate for one another were attracted to one another, and the emotions that their romantic feelings generated overwhelmed them. They made the irrevocable but immature decision to commit suicide rather than allow their emotional fixation upon one another to go unrequited.

That was a tragic outcome, and one that we seldom see in our society, because the sexual restraint that Romeo and Juliet practiced is not the norm in our society. Romeo and Juliet committed suicide because their parents forbid them to be together, but in our society, rather than committing suicide, children either don’t ask their parents or ignore their parents, as they simply consummate inappropriate relationships. 38% of the children born in our society are born out of wedlock.

It takes time to complete the intellectual and social development need to participate in a mature, monogamous relationship. And time is often that which young people are often not willing to give themselves. Part of immaturity is the desire to have a partner NOW, inappropriateness notwithstanding.

But God gives us a different perspective in his treatise on love given through the Apostle Paul in **1Corinthians 13**. Starting in the 4th verse of that chapter God gives us the attributes that make up godly love. The Bible says, in the first clause of **1Corinthians 13:4**:

4 Love is patient.

The first, the primary attribute of love is patience. When we display the lack of patience that causes us to have sex with someone that is objectively



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inappropriate for us, we are not in love, but are rather indulging the feeling that the Bible calls lust. And the Bible tells us, in **Proverbs 6:23–29**:

23 For these commands are a lamp, this teaching is a light, and the corrections of discipline are the way to life,

24 keeping you from the immoral woman, from the smooth tongue of the wayward wife.

25 Do not lust in your heart after her beauty or let her captivate you with her eyes,

26 for the prostitute reduces you to a loaf of bread, and the adulteress preys upon your very life.

27 Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned?

28 Can a man walk on hot coals without his feet being scorched?

29 So is he who sleeps with another man's wife; no one who touches her will go unpunished.

Now, Proverbs gives these commandments to men so that they will not commit adultery or fornication. The wise Solomon, in this passage of Scripture, warns men about women that are off track, the immoral single women who are willing to have sex out of wedlock, the immoral married women that are willing to commit adultery, and the immoral women that are willing to prostitute themselves, all of whom are put before us by the devil to derail us from having the mature, monogamous relationship that would best serve us.

It is a fairly simple equation. Mature monogamy requires patience and restraint. If we allow lust to overcome us and act on our lustful feelings, we will be scooping fire into our laps and walking on hot coals.

And some things can't be fixed. Some mistakes, when made, cannot be taken back. Some consequences, once contracted, are for life. And some errors, when made, are fatal.

But we have all these feelings, we have all these desires, we have all these bonding chemicals in our systems, and even God says that it is not good for us to be alone. What are we to do?

Hold that thought. Let's go back to Hannah, who had a similar, but not exactly the same, problem. Yes, she had a husband, but her husband had another wife. And although her husband was very, very, very good to her, he was not able to give her that which she wanted, which she lusted after, that being, a child. She couldn't blame her husband, because his other wife, her rival, had, not just a child, but children.

Hannah's situation was analogous to all those men and woman that want a long term, monogamous, objectively appropriate mate and have not found a suitable one. Hannah, like them, wanted something to which she felt entitled by her status, and she was being prohibited from having it.

But Hannah had the maturity that many people do not have. Although she could not have that which she wanted, that being a child, she did not blame her



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husband. Hannah recognized Elkanah's love for her. Knowing that her barrenness was not her husband's fault, she treated him in such a way that she remained his favorite.

To fix her problem, Hannah went to see the one that was responsible for her barrenness. Hannah was mature enough to recognize that her problem could not be solved by scapegoating someone that was not responsible for it. In some cases, it may make us feel better temporarily, to blame or beat someone up that is available to us although they are not responsible for our problem, as Rachel tried to beat up her husband Jacob when she was frustrated about being barren. However, it is not intelligent to indulge our feelings when the outcome of our indulgence is not going to be productive as, in the case of Jacob and Rachel, there was nothing that Jacob could do about Rachel's barrenness.

One of the most important things that we can realize is that our feelings are not necessarily logical or rational. Our feelings do not necessarily reflect reality, and just because we feel something does not mean that we should indulge the feeling.

Jesus defined our love for Him by saying, in **John 14:15**:

15 "If you love Me, keep My commandments.

And Jesus does not qualify His statement by adding anything about how we feel about keeping His commandments. Whether or not we feel like keeping His commandments, if we love Him, we will keep them. And while I have nothing against praise and worship in church, and I recognize that, in certain situations, praise and worship are extremely comforting, praising the Lord and worshiping Him audibly is no substitute for keeping Jesus' commandments. **Luke 11:27–28** tells us:

27 And it happened, as [Jesus] spoke these things, that a certain woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, "Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts which nursed You!"

28 But [Jesus] said, "More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"

Back to Hannah, who chose to not indulge her feelings. Hannah was in anguish because her rival was taunting her about not having children, and there is nothing that either she or her husband could do to change that situation. So, Hannah, wisely, went to see the one that could affect her situation. **1 Samuel 1:10–11** tells us:

10 And [Hannah] was in bitterness of soul, and prayed to the LORD and wept in anguish.

11 Then she made a vow and said, "O LORD of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head."



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Hannah wanted her womb opened, and Hannah recognized that the Lord controls the fertility of the planet and the increase of individuals. In **2Chronicles 7:12–16**:

12 Then the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said to him: “I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice.

13 When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people,

14 if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

15 Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer made in this place.

16 For now I have chosen and sanctified this house, that My name may be there forever; and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually.

The solution for barrenness involves prayer, but the complete solution involves more than prayer. Along with our prayers, we must humble ourselves, seek God and turn from our wicked ways. That is the point at which God will hear, and fix our situation.

So if we go back to our earlier thought, the one about the 38% of the children in our country born out of wedlock because of our inability to find suitable mature monogamous spouses, we find the solution to that problem in the example of Hannah.

Just as Hannah wanted her womb opened, some people want faithful spouses with whom they can share mature love. Hannah went to see the Lord about her problem, and Hannah not only asked the Lord for that which she wanted, but she also promised the Lord that which she perceived He wanted.

And what does the Lord want? The Lord wants us. **Numbers 6:1-2, 5, 8** tells us:

1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

2 “Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When either a man or woman consecrates an offering to take the vow of a Nazirite, to separate himself to the LORD,

5 ‘All the days of the vow of his separation no razor shall come upon his head; until the days are fulfilled for which he separated himself to the LORD, he shall be holy. Then he shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow.

8 All the days of his separation he shall be holy to the LORD.

Hannah vowed to God that if He would but give her a male child, she would arrange the child’s upbringing so that he would be holy to the Lord all the days of His life. And in the land of Israel, the Lord needed holy people. You may remember that this episode is still in the period of the Judges, and, as the last verse in the book of Judges tells us, **Judges 21:25**:



25 In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

So Hannah is offering to set the fruit of her womb apart to God for God to use to bring the land of Israel into holiness. And God is going to need such a man.

As Hannah is praying to God at the temple, she is not alone. We have already read, in the “b” portion of **1Samuel 1:9**:

9 Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat by the doorpost of the tabernacle of the LORD.

Eli the priest was the current judge of Israel. But Eli, being old, brought his sons into the family business, as the “b” portion of **1Samuel 1:3** tells us:

3 Also the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the LORD, were there.

And the two sons of Eli were not sterling examples of the priesthood.

1Samuel 2:22–25 says:

22 Now Eli was very old; and he heard everything his sons did to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

23 So he said to them, “Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all the people.

24 No, my sons! For it is not a good report that I hear. You make the LORD’s people transgress.

25 If one man sins against another, God will judge him. But if a man sins against the LORD, who will intercede for him?” Nevertheless they did not heed the voice of their father, because the LORD desired to kill them.

Eli was old, his sons and successors Hophni and Phinehas were corrupt, as they used their position to make women perform immoral acts. Hophni and Phinehas were on the fast track for destruction, and God needed a man to lead his people. Hannah was barren, but she pledged that, if the Lord would but open her womb, she would set her firstborn son apart to the Lord from his birth.

We see God navigating the circumstances of life and gathering us under the authority of His word. God, through Hannah’s barrenness, has, unbeknownst to her, given her an opportunity to serve on His program.

Interestingly, God gives us all that same opportunity. He uses the circumstances of life to navigate us to the place in which we can be used. As we have already read, God tells us, in **2Chronicles 7:14**:

14 if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

Why do we have this great problem with out-of-wedlock births in our country? The problem exists because young people indulge their feelings and consummate their desires for a mate outside of the plan and the will of God.



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Young people recognize that it is not good to be alone, but they are too arrogant to pray and seek God, and are willing to get that which they want in a wicked way, because they want to indulge their feelings now. Everybody else has someone, and I should have someone too, whether or not that person is objectively proper for me to have. No, we're not married, but I want somebody. And maybe I'll never get married. But I want a baby; babies are cuddly, when they are cleaned up they smell wonderful, and as long as I have a baby, I'll never be alone.

Just think back to the days when your child was a baby. Weren't those wonderful days? Unfortunately, there is no life form, including human life, in which the baby remains a baby forever. Before long, there are the terrible twos, as the child's personality begins to form in earnest and he or she begins to become rebellious. Not so cute not, huh?

A few years later, puberty will hit. Menstrual periods and mood swings, hormonal situations and adult desires in a body that is maturing topped by a mind that is not. An adolescent boy that can make babies still wants to play video games. A adolescent girl that wants to do things that grown ups do, but is too immature to choose someone with whom to do those things to whom she can be married for the rest of her life.

Back in the 1990s, I wrote a computer program to mechanize some processes in my company. That was not my job, but the implementation of the program saved the company a great deal of money. I was awarded a prize for my innovation, and was transferred out of my management job into a job mechanizing processes all over the company. The next year, I started reporting to a programming group in Chicago. I got up every Monday morning, drove to Capital City airport, caught a plane and flew to Chicago. Then I spent my week writing programs and flying around the region implementing them, and each Friday I flew back home, spent the weekend with my wife and son, and jetted back out on Monday.

This went on for a year and a half. One Wednesday afternoon, the phone in my office rang. I answered it, and it was my wife. "Dear", she began, "You need to come home."

"I'll be home on Friday, dear", I replied. "Can it wait until then?"

"No, dear", my wife said, "that's not what I mean. I mean that you have to come home to work, permanently."

"Dear", I replied, "I don't get it. What is the problem?"

"The problem is your son", my wife replied, "He's growing up and he needs you."

"Okay, dear", I replied, "I'll go talk to my boss and see what I can do."

So I did. When I went to his office to explain the situation to him, he told me to shut the door and sit down. "If you need to go home to work", he told me, "do it. We'll figure out how to get the job done. Every month, I have to take a



week off and fly to Arizona where my son is. He's in drug rehab down there, because when he was your son's age, I was like you. I was married to his mother, but I wasn't home. I was flying around the country. Without a Dad around, he got into drugs, and you can guess the rest. So you go home and take care of your son so you don't end up like me."

Just think back to the days when your child was a baby. Weren't those wonderful days? Unfortunately, there is no life form, including human life, in which the baby remains a baby forever. And a boy needs a father, as **Proverbs 22:6** tells us, to:

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

And a girl needs a father to love her. Everyone female needs love and attachment. It's built into their endocrine systems, into the hormones that flow through their body.

I was sitting in the living room working on this sermon yesterday right outside of my wife's office. She was scrapbooking while the television in her office was on the Lifetime Movie network. I was there for about four hours, and movie after movie came on with the same plot. Some young girl was looking for love and going through the drama that young love entails.

And that channel resonates with women because of those hormones that they have. The Lord gave them the hormones, because, as He 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."

As a man's helper, a woman is designed to be bonded to a man. And until a girl is mature enough to be married, the man that God gives her to whom she should be bonded is her father. If we review **Deuteronomy 22**, starting with **verse 13**, we will find the regulations regarding marriage, and the father is the one to whom the young man desiring a wife must apply. A young woman, with her hormonal bondedness, may not be objective enough to make a good choice in a mate, so God delegates the responsibility to oversee the girl's decision for a mate to her father. And if the girl makes the decision on her own, the young man is still beholden to the girl's father. **Deuteronomy 22:28–29** tells us:

28 "If a man finds a young woman who is a virgin, who is not betrothed, and he seizes her and lies with her, and they are found out, 29 then the man who lay with her shall give to the young woman's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife because he has humbled her; he shall not be permitted to divorce her all his days.

Since the young man did not give the father the opportunity to reject him because of his inappropriateness, God legally binds the young man to the young woman for life, and instructs the young man to compensate the father because of the young man's rashness in decision making.



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God's design for the genders is that young women stay in their father's house until they move into their husband's house, because women are designed to be bonded to men. And our wedding ceremonies acknowledge God's design, as a man, generally the woman's father, gives the bride to the groom in the ceremony.

And God designed marriage, because those cute, adorable little snuggly babies are not going to remain snuggly forever. Eventually they are going to grow up, and although a mother can handle the demands of a diaper baby without a father pretty easily, mothers cannot handle the demands of a child as he or she grows into maturity. As the child matures, he or she requires a father for their training and protection, and God institutes marriage so that the father will be warming up in the bullpen until the mother can't pitch any more, and then Dad can come in and close out the game.

Of course, life is not as cut and dried as that. Dads can do a lot with babies and toddlers, and young adult women still need their mothers. But I hope you see my point. Mom, having those hormones, provides emotional support, while Dad, having his objectivity, provides the type of support that leads young adults into good, objective decisions.

And so, the out-of-wedlock birth problem in our society is fixable. The Lord tells us, in **2Chronicles 7:14**:

14 if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

Sex outside of wedlock is the wicked way. Those that reject this teaching lack humility because think that they know better than God, who tells us, in

Hebrews 13:4:

4 Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

And since marriage is honorable, God wants us to be married. Even with the supposed numerical inequity between the genders, God wants all of us that call upon Him to be happily and honorably married, just as God wanted Hannah, who was barren, to have children.

But God had a special use for Hannah's child, and God withheld the child from Hannah until Hannah was ready to give the child back to God for His own use. And **1Samuel 1:19–28** tells us:

19 Then [Elkanah and his family] rose early in the morning and worshiped before the LORD, and returned and came to their house at Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and the LORD remembered her.

20 So it came to pass in the process of time that Hannah conceived and bore a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, "Because I have asked for him from the LORD."



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21 Now the man Elkanah and all his house went up to offer to the LORD the yearly sacrifice and his vow.

22 But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, “Not until the child is weaned; then I will take him, that he may appear before the LORD and remain there forever.”

23 So Elkanah her husband said to her, “Do what seems best to you; wait until you have weaned him. Only let the LORD establish His word.” Then the woman stayed and nursed her son until she had weaned him.

24 Now when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bulls, one ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and brought him to the house of the LORD in Shiloh. And the child was young.

25 Then they slaughtered a bull, and brought the child to Eli.

26 And she said, “O my lord! As your soul lives, my lord, I am the woman who stood by you here, praying to the LORD.

27 For this child I prayed, and the LORD has granted me my petition which I asked of Him.

28 Therefore I also have lent him to the LORD; as long as he lives he shall be lent to the LORD.” So they worshiped the LORD there.

And then, after Hannah prayed a prayer of thanksgiving to the Lord,

1Samuel 2:11 records:

11 Then Elkanah went to his house at Ramah. But the child [Samuel] ministered to the LORD before Eli the priest.

Hannah left her son with Eli the priest, and the boy grew, ministered to the Lord, and became the next great judge of Israel in the stead of Eli’s wicked sons.

Children are a blessing to our lives when we have them within the will and plan of God. And Samuel was not the only child that God brought into the world to be a blessing to His people, as **John 3:16–17** tells us:

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.

God’s Son was set apart, as was Samuel, to minister to the Lord before the priests, and the scribes and the Pharisees, who were as corrupt as were Eli’s sons. And God’s Son’s ministry was to die, to be crucified, on the Cross of Calvary, as a sacrifice, as a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world; not an animal sacrifice of bulls or goats, but a human sacrifice Who had the power to display the love of God to this sin sick world and to show us the road upon which to travel to become one with God once again, despite our sinfulness. And Jesus, the sinless Son of God tells us, in **John 14:15**:

15 “If you love Me, keep My commandments.



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And when waiting for the Lord to move on our behalf while keeping His commandments is not easy, let us remember that which the Holy Spirit, through the pen of the Apostle Paul, tells us, in the first clause of **1Corinthians 13:4:**

4 Love is patient.

So let us patiently love the Lord, let us humble ourselves, pray, seek God's face and turn from our wicked ways. Let us give ourselves and set ourselves, our bodies and the fruit of our bodies apart to the Lord. And, let us work on His program rather than expecting Him to work on ours.

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