

BGM BIBLE COLLEGE

The Biblical Foundations of Marriage and Family.

Lecture 01 by Tariq Waris

In this course we shall learn, both from the Old Testament and from the New, what the Holy Scripture teaches concerning marriage and the household; and, as need required, I shall also set before you certain practical matters.

Our first lecture is upon the foundational narrative of marriage, even that story whereby the ordinance of wedlock was first established. This we find in the Book of Genesis, chapters one unto three. These first three chapters set forth the beginning of marriage, the purpose thereof, and the several duties of husband and wife. In the lectures to come we shall follow the holy history in order, yet today we begin with Genesis chapters one through three.

Though our beginning is in the Old Testament, yet in due season we shall also behold what the New Testament saith. For from Genesis unto Revelation we will survey what the inspired Word declared concerning marriage and the family. Thus we shall consider Adam and Eve, the promises of God unto Abraham, the Law of Moses, the reign of David, and afterward in the New Testament, the doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Apostle Paul, and the early Christians. Today's lecture is concerning the divine beginning of marriage; for marriage had its origin in God. And behold, both our Lord Jesus Christ and Paul His apostle, when they speak of marriage, referred unto the first three chapters of Genesis.

These chapters set before us God as the Creator of all things—almighty, all-wise, eternal before time, who by His Word brought all things into being. Before ever we know Him as Redeemer and Lawgiver, we must first know Him as Creator. And marriage itself is a part of His creative work; for when God made man, male and female, in His own image, then did He ordain also the estate of matrimony.

But in these chapters is also told the fall of man, how by the subtlety of the serpent mankind rebelled against the Creator, and so became a fallen creature under sin.

Three chief principles therefore we gather from Genesis one through three:

First, that God made man and woman in His own image, and gave them dominion upon the earth.

Secondly, that man was formed first, and unto him is committed the final responsibility of the marriage covenant; whereas the woman was given to be a help meet for him.

Thirdly, that both the man and the woman, having fallen into sin, did alike bear the grievous consequences thereof.

Now let us consider the first point: that God made man and woman in His own image to rule upon the earth. It is written in [Genesis 1:27–28](#):

So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moved upon the earth.

Here in we learn that both man and woman alike were created in the image of God. Therefore in worth, in dignity, and in significance they are equal; for as much as the man is precious, so also is the woman precious; as much as the man hath honour, so also hath the woman honour.

But what meant this phrase that man is made in the image of God? Some have said, because man possessed intelligence, will, and emotion, even as God. Yet when we read the sacred text in its ancient context, we perceive a greater truth: that the image of God is chiefly functional, that is, man and woman are His representatives upon earth, appointed to exercise rule and dominion under Him.

Thus as in the ancient kingdoms, a ruler set up his image in distant lands to signify his reign, even so hath God set man and woman in the earth as His living image, to declare His sovereignty. For the LORD made not images of stone or wood, but fashioned mankind in His likeness, saying: These are my representatives upon the earth.

So then, to be in the image of God is to bear authority under Him, to subdue the earth, and to replenish it with offspring. Yet let it be remembered, the ultimate Lord and Owner is God Himself; man is but the steward, to whom the charge hath been given. God is the Owner, and man the trustee; God the King, and man His appointed representative.

The Shared Stewardship of Man and Woman

And in this wise is man made in the image of God: for dominion and stewardship are given unto both together. This rule and authority is mutual, yea, a joint commission. Both man and woman are partakers thereof. Together they are called to govern the earth for the glory of God, to bring forth seed, and to exercise dominion.

The division of their several duties is thus: the man's chief charge is to provide for his wife and children; and the woman's primary charge is to tend and nurture the household. Yet a woman may labour abroad; nevertheless, before she venture forth, she must first fulfil her holy calling as wife and mother. In like manner the husband, when he returned unto his house, must not withhold his hand, but help his wife in the tasks thereof.

Thus in the beginning, even in Genesis chapter one, we behold this holy order established.

The Headship of the Man in Marriage

The second point is this: that in the covenant of marriage the ultimate responsibility is laid upon the man; and the woman is given unto him as a help meet, a suitable companion.

It is written: *And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him (Genesis 2:18).* And again: *But for Adam there was not found a help meet for him (Genesis 2:20).*

Paul also beareth witness, saying: *For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man* (1 Corinthians 11:8–9). Yet let no man despise the woman, as though she were but a toy; for she is created not for his pleasure alone, but to be his meet companion and fellow labourer. The husband is the head of the wife, but not her master; for the only Lord is God, who hath entrusted headship unto the man that he might lead with love and service.

The Command Given Unto the Man

The holy record sheweth that unto Adam, before ever Eve was formed, the commandment of God was given. *shalt surely And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou die* (Genesis 2:16–17).

Thus the headship is manifest: for the man received both the charge of obedience and the gift of his wife. *And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man* (Genesis 2:22). And Adam said, *this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man* (Genesis 2:23).

Hence the created order is revealed: first God, then the man, then the woman, given as a gift and a helper. Paul the apostle declared the same in his epistles.

The Order of Creation

The order of creation is this: God made man first, set him in the garden, and gave him labour and charge. *And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it* (Genesis 2:15). *Adam received the command before Eve was made, and named the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air* (Genesis 2:19–20). Yet in all these things, God beheld that it was not good for man to be alone. Therefore He made the woman to be his companion.

Thus companionship was ordained of God that the man might not dwell in solitude, but walk with his wife in fellowship and partnership, as two wheels of one chariot.

God's Original Design for Marriage

Mark well: unto Adam was given but one wife, not many. Thus from the beginning God ordained a monogamous union, one man and one woman. The corruption of polygamy arose only after the fall of man.

Moreover, the union is heterosexual: for the LORD made not another man for Adam, but a woman. Therefore same-sex unions, though permitted among the nations, are contrary to the creative order of God. His design is one man and one woman, joined together in holy matrimony.

Marriage as Divine Institution

Finally, the Scripture witnessed that marriage is of God, not of man. Adam asked not for a wife; but the LORD God, beholding his need, created the woman and brought her unto him.

Marriage therefore is no invention of culture, nor decree of government, nor ordinance of any earthly institution, but the creation of Almighty God, springing forth from His eternal counsel and holy purpose.

Marriage as the Creation of God

Behold, marriage is the ordinance of God's own mind, a covenant framed in His eternal counsel. It is not the invention of man, but the work of the Most High. Marriage is **monogamous**—one man and one woman joined together. Marriage is **heterosexual**—between male and female. For it is written in the sayings of men: *God created Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve*. Yea, the LORD made Adam and Eve, not Adam and another man.

The Order of Creation: Man First, Woman as Companion

God made man first, and from the man did He fashion the woman, to be a helper suitable for him. Therefore the holy Augustine speaketh wisely, saying: *The woman was not taken from the foot of man, lest he should trample her down (though many cruel men have so done); neither from his head, lest she should rule over him. But from his side, near his heart, was she taken, that man might love her and protect her.*

Thus at the first there was no striving for rule between them; but rather there was loving harmony, peace, and concord. The strife of authority came only after sin entered into the world.

The Meaning of “Helper”

The Scripture saith: *I will make him a help meet for him* (**Genesis 2:18**). In the Hebrew tongue the word is ‘ēzer, which signified a helper suited to his nature and his need. She is both a **companion** and an **associate** in his work.

Together they received the charge: *Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it* (**Genesis 1:28**). The man is called to lead in this task, and the woman to support; yet both are partakers together in the labour. To dress and to keep the garden (**Genesis 2:15**), to name the beasts of the field (**Genesis 2:19**), and to rule over the creatures—this dominion was given unto mankind as one.

God as “Helper” in the Covenant

Mark this also: the word ‘ēzer (helper) is oft applied unto God Himself in the Holy Writ. It is written: *The God of my father was mine help* (**Exodus 18:4**). And again: *Our soul waited for the LORD: He is our help and our shield* (**Psalms 33:20**). And yet again: *O Israel, trust thou in the LORD: He is their help and their shield* (**Psalms 115:9–11**).

Even so the LORD, having bound Himself by covenant unto Israel, stood with them as their Helper to fulfil His promise. Likewise marriage is a covenant; and the wife, standing by her husband, remained faithful as his helper, even as the LORD was faithful unto His people.

The Equality of Worth, the Distinction of Roles

Some in these latter days reason thus: If the woman is called “**helper**,” even as God is called “Helper,” then she cannot be under the man, nor he over her. Yet this reasoning erreth.

For as touching **ontology**—their being as human creatures—man and woman are equal; both bear the image of God, both alike in worth, dignity, and honour. Yet as touching **function**—the works appointed unto them—God hath given the man the headship, and the woman the office of helper.

The headship of the man is not a carnal tyranny, nor a dominion after the flesh; but rather a loving leadership. For the apostle saith: *Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it* (**Ephesians 5:25**).

Thus the man’s charge is to love, to cherish, and to provide; the woman’s charge is to help, to support, and to stand by him. Together they walk in the covenant of marriage, equal in being, diverse in function, yet one in the LORD.

Conclusion of the Teaching

Therefore, as human beings, man and woman are equal in worth; but in their roles and responsibilities they are distinct. This is the second point of our teaching on the biblical foundation of marriage.

