

Man was not intended to be alone, but is to be a social creature. No one should be an isolated individual.

1. Man incomplete without a woman

- *Not designed to be solitary*
- *Applies to marriage*
- *Applies corporately*

1. **Man is incomplete without woman.** After the repeated statements in Genesis 1 that *'it was good'*, Genesis 2:18 comes as a surprise. *'It was **not** good that the man should be alone'*. It was not that God had created something evil, but at one point in the sixth 'day' the work was not yet finished. The man was not designed to be a solitary individual; womankind was missing.

I believe this statement partly means that man was – generally speaking – made for marriage. For most men it is true to say that they need womanly companionship. But I also believe that this statement has implications corporately. The sexes should not be segregated too much. All-male company has something missing from it. The opposite is true also. When women get together and there is no male touch about their fellowship there is something missing. The two sexes need each other. All-male groups and all-female groups always seem to have a certain dimension lacking. At more than one level they need each other. Adam was painfully incomplete at this stage of his story (as the deep cry of 2:23 suggests). He was radically and seriously deficient without a wife.

2. Woman-kind is seriously incomplete without man

2. The opposite is true. **Womankind is seriously incomplete without man.** In the story of Genesis 2 they are an original unity separated out into a duality (Eve came from Adam's rib). The two sexes were originally one; and they 'click' when they are together again. Woman is incomplete unless she is alongside him. Equally only she can meet Adam's deficiency at this point.

3. There is significance in the order of events

- Man's task is leadership
- *Equal partners*

3. **There is significance in the order of events.** Man has been given work to do¹. When he was given the task of ruling over the earth, he was alone. *'Man is not from woman, but woman is from man'*². Womankind came in alongside mankind, as an equal partner to help him in the work that he was given to do. There is both equality and leadership here. There is leadership since man was given the task to do, at a point when no woman was present. There is also equality, since the woman is as much in the image of God as the man³ and can contribute to the partnership as much as the man. Yet in the order of events man was the 'chairman' in the teamwork between man and woman. There may be exceptions to the rule – but they are exceptions. The sequence of events is important. *'Adam was formed first'*, says Paul, *'then Eve'*⁴. It is for this reason that women are not given supreme authority – generally speaking. And it is for this reason that the man is 'head' within marriage⁵. Man's headship is a matter of function, of 'chairmanship' within a team. It has nothing to do with superiority or inferiority. Men and women are equals, but within the equality there is a 'chairman'. He is not 'superior', but in the relationship between the sexes **without** his being superior in himself he has been placed as overseer, or (as I like to put it) 'chairman'. In a committee the 'chairman' may not be the cleverest person around

¹ 2:15

² 1 Corinthians 11:8

³ see 1:26

⁴ 1 Timothy 2:13

⁵ Ephesians 5:22-24

, but for the sake of order he takes the lead.

The Biblical Approach to Marriage

1. Marriage is normal and for most people it is needful

- Animal companionship is not enough

- Three exceptions to the rule

- Early church tended to go astray on the issue of marriage

- Forbidding to marry – a doctrine of demons

This is the background to the biblical approach to marriage.

Marriage is normal and for most people it is needful. Adam is deficient when he is alone. He needs ‘a helper corresponding to him’^{□1}. God invites Adam to study the animals^{□2}. Adam’s giving names to the animals means that he is studying their nature. Names in the ancient world were descriptions. It is as if Adam is looking to see whether any animal can be an adequate companion for him. But the result is: there was no helper corresponding to him^{□3}. Man is not good alone, but animal-companionship is not enough to meet the need.

Marriage is normal and generally necessary. He who finds a wife ‘obtains favour from the Lord’^{□1}. In Matthew 19:3–12 Jesus mentions the exceptions to the rule. The disciples raise the possibility that perhaps it is best to stay single. Jesus says only three types of people can accept this. There are (i) those who have no inclination for marriage (‘eunuchs ... from their mother’s womb’); (ii) there are those who are incapable of marriage (‘eunuch . . . made eunuchs by men’); and (iii) there are those who have the gift of singleness and they use that gift for God (‘eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’). But Jesus is listing exceptions! Most people are not ‘eunuchs’ at all!

The early church tended to go astray at this point. Men like Augustine, Jerome and Tertullian, scholars in the early church, had a false view of marriage. It arose from ideas that they inherited from Greek philosophy. So they were all hostile to marriage and sexuality. The early church started ‘monasteries’ where people vowed not to get married. Tertullian told his wife that if he died she should not remarry. It would be unspiritual, he thought! Then the idea came into the church that preachers should not get married – the celibacy of the clergy! It was all entirely unscriptural. ‘Forbidding to marry’ is a ‘doctrine of demons’^{□1}. ‘It is not good for the man to be alone’.

□1 2:18

□2 2:19

□3 2:20

□1

Proverbs 18:22; see also Proverbs 5:18; 19:22; Proverbs 31:10–31; Ecclesiastes 9:9; 1 Timothy 4:1–3; 5:14; Hebrews 13:4

□1

see 1 Timothy 4:1–3



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