

God's Design for Marriage - Session One

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Hi and welcome to this six part series that I call, God's design for marriage. We're really glad to have you with us today.

Speaking of design, our God is a master designer. We see it throughout creation and no less in marriage as well. Incredible design that we would do good to pay attention to.

I love this series and I love how you've developed it. I've watched you develop it over decades really, share this information with a group. Share it in our front room with couples that wanted to get married. Share it with people who are struggling in their marriage, and I think there's just a wealth of information in these six weeks, I'm excited about it.

I am too. Whether you are ready to get married. Whether you are needing some hope and healing in your marriage and you're looking for a solid biblical foundation. Or whether you been married for a while and you just want a refresher understanding of what God's design for marriage is all about, I think you're going to find this series very helpful. All right. Well, let's get into it.

Well, tonight we're calling this, Part One of our marriage series and this is essentially marriage in the Bible. What marriage looks like in the Bible. And it's particularly going to be asking one question throughout the course of this evening. And that simple question is, what was God's intention? Or what did God intend when He created marriage? Because marriage is not something that we came up with.

Mankind never sat down one time and said, gee, we ought to do this thing, let's call it marriage, and we'll come together and we'll make promises. One, that wasn't man's idea, it was God's idea. So this institution belongs to Him.

So it's best for us to ask the question, what did He intend? We know what the world thinks about marriage. We know even what we think about marriage. What does He, what did God think? What does God think about this thing called marriage and what did He intend for it to be?

And what we're going to do is we're going to break down what the Word says tonight into four essential categories. And I'll put these up on the screen so that you can see them.

- The Origin of Marriage
- The Covenant of Marriage
- The Sacredness of Marriage
- The Order of Marriage

We're going to be looking tonight at the Origin of Marriage. We're going to look at the Covenant of Marriage. We're going to look at the Sacredness of Marriage. And then finally, we're going to look at the Order of Marriage.

Those four areas and we'll have scriptures for each one of those. If you're taking notes, you might want to do that and remember some of these.

- Origin of Marriage

Let's begin with the first section, which is the Origin of Marriage. And talking about the origin of marriage is an important place to begin because we learn a lot from that origin.

The origin of marriage is essentially laid out for us in the Book of Genesis and this is where we read about the very first marriage ceremony that took place with the first two people that were on the earth. And by the way, God officiated.

He still attends, I believe every marriage ceremony that is of two people coming together; husband and wife. But we're going to be looking first of all at Genesis chapter 2, beginning at verse 18, and these scriptures will be up on the screen so that you can look at them, or you can look them up in your Bible. There's a lot here. It begins by saying,

Genesis 2:18, 21-23 (ESV)

Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."

Then the LORD God said, "It is not good (for the man or) that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."

Now there are several things in this simple and very first passage concerning the origin of marriage that we need to look at. We need to understand something about what's happening or what is being said in this passage. It is being said during creation week. All right.

God is still creating. This is, He's really come to the place of His master creation, which is man, but He's still in the process of creating. And I want to remind you about something. How did God create during creation week? He spoke things into existence, didn't He? He said, this is the way it's, "*Let there be light, and there was light.*" (Genesis 1:3) So what God is saying becomes a reality.

I want you to notice the first thing that we hear God saying about the man. He says in verse 18, it's not good for that. The man should be alone.

Now He could have made the man any way he wanted to. He could have made the man to be good with being alone. I mean, technically speaking, the man wasn't even totally alone. There were the animals. There were probably angels that..., who knows. Adam could have been talking, hanging out with the angels. We don't really know. But God was there with Adam as well so technically he wasn't alone. And so there's something deeper going on here.

And God begins to speak about that need of the man that He's actually creating in him. It's not good for the man to be alone. Boom! Suddenly man has this woman size hole in his heart that only she can fill. And I want you to notice that God never creates a need that He doesn't always and also fill that need.

Notice the next thing in the passages. So God said, "*I will make...*" Remember, we're still in creation week. I will literally create, I will create. Well, what is God going to create? This is important for us to see, because remember, we're asking the question, what did God intend by creating this thing called marriage?

Well, it starts with the people that He created to be married. He said, "*I will make... a helper...*" And that's the first thing we learn about God's intention for

marriage is that the woman was created from the very beginning to be a helper. Now if you were raised on the King James Bible, you'll remember that this original word was, helpmate. We don't really use that word much today. It truly just means helper and so this is an accurate translation. But God created the woman to be a helper, to come alongside.

And I want you to notice something else about the way God created the woman. He said, I will make a helper fit for him. In other words, she's tailor made. God created the need, and then He created everything the man needed in the woman.

There is so much pressure today put upon women to be something that culture demands that she be, but we see in this passage that a woman is created from the very beginning to be exactly what the man needs. Created by God, tailor made. I will make a helper fit. I think it's the NIV that says, suitable. I like fit, actually. Just, she's a perfect fit for the man.

And so then we read that the Lord God caused the man to fall into this deep sleep. He took some part of the body of Adam and it says rib. And that's really more of a traditional sort of a deal, some sort of a body part, and use that to create the woman.

And that too is an interesting and significant statement because the man was essentially made from the dirt. From the dust of the earth, He created the man, put him together, breathed into him the breath of life, but the woman was created from the man.

And God is speaking through these ideas, these pictures that the woman is going to draw her life from the man in an incredible sort of a way.

And it says that after having created the woman, it says that the Lord "*brought her to the man.*" This is where we get the tradition of the father walking the daughter down the aisle, the father presenting the bride to the groom. It says the Lord "*brought her.*" He literally walked her. I don't know if there was an aisle of trees or something like that, who knows.

But He "*brought her to the man*" and the man looked at her, and he said, what a knockout. I don't know. He instantly recognized that this woman had been made for him purposely, powerfully, beautifully made for him. And he began to speak of how she'd been made. He knew and understood that she had been made from him.

And he said, *“This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh;”* And then he names her just as he had named all of the animals. He names the woman, refers to her as with that special name, and says that her name is *“because she was taken out of Man.”*

Now, the significance of this is some things that we're going to look at later in some of our studies, but already you can see that in this one single passage that speaks of the origin of marriage, and specifically the origin of how God created the first two that entered into the first marriage, we see so much about God's intention. And we would do good to pay attention to it, to understand, because God being the creator of marriage knows best how it's going to run.

When I was a young boy, young man, actually, I got my first car. My dad helped me buy it because I got a job in radio. I was 16 years old and so he helped me buy it. I think we paid like 350 for it. Never forget it. It was a 1960 something Buick or Oldsmobile. That's right. It was an Oldsmobile Delta 88. Big boat of a car. I don't know why. I don't know what my dad was thinking.

But he helped me buy this car for which I paid him back. But he never really told me how to take care of it, so I never did. I never changed the oil. I didn't know you were supposed to do that. And then I started, I learned from some of my friends that you should probably change the oil once in a while, and so I did it once in a while.

Well, eventually the car started leaking oil and it seized up on me eventually, it wouldn't start at all. And it was a very, painful lesson for me to learn as a young man. But what I learned was the manufacturer has specific specifications for how to take care of this thing so it's going to run well. And I ignored the specifications. I didn't do the maintenance that I needed to do.

And do you know that there are many couples today who get married, but they ignore the manufacturer's specifications related to their marriage, and then they wonder why they're broken down on the side of the road with the hood up on the engine, and the smoke billowing out of the engine compartment. And they're wondering, how in the world did we get here broken down Well, you ignored the manufacturer's specifications.?

God's Word gives insight into how this thing called marriage is supposed to run. And we learn a great deal from this very first passage. It speaks of the origin of marriage. We learn about the fact that the very reason we come together is because God created us to need one another.

It's not good for the man to be alone. We know that the woman is called to come alongside to be his helper. We know that she's fit and tailor made for him. We learn all of these things in this simple first passage.

We learned that this is a special thing that God ordained and so the origin of marriage is very important to take into consideration as we think about marriage from a biblical perspective.

Let's go on to the next point, which is the Covenant of Marriage. And when we talk about a covenant, most of you know that a covenant is essentially an agreement. And when you come together as a couple, you obviously make an agreement with one another.

You make promises to one another. You say, I promise. I vow to honor and cherish you, take care of you, and so on, and so on. And you make those promises one to another in front of witnesses, and that's an important part of a covenant. But what we often forget is that this is a covenant made before God and that's what we're going to look at.

The Bible actually speaks of marriage using that word, covenant. It is actually a three way agreement rather than a two way agreement because it's made between the husband, the wife, and the Lord.

And unfortunately, some of the passages that speak of this are negative examples, but they're examples nonetheless. The first is in Proverbs chapter 2. Let me show you this one. It says,

Proverbs 2:16-17 (ESV)

So you will be delivered from the forbidden woman, from the adulteress with her smooth words, who forsakes the companion of her youth and forgets the covenant of her God;

So you will be delivered (and by the way, this is speaking of the benefits of wisdom in Proverbs chapter 2. What are the benefits of wisdom? Well, you'll *be delivered*) *from the forbidden woman, from the adulteress with her smooth words, who forsakes the companion of her youth and forgets the covenant of her God;*

That's not speaking of the Mosaic covenant. That's talking about the covenant of marriage. She forgets her covenant or the covenant. In fact, the NIV actually translates this, “*the covenant she made before God.*”

So in this simple passage, we see that God sees your marriage agreement as a covenant that you made with Him. A covenant that He oversees. A covenant, by the way, and also made before witnesses. And that's something else we learned. Let's look at Malachi chapter 2, verses 13 and 14. This is where God is confronting the people of Judah and saying,

Malachi 2:13-14 (ESV)

And this second thing you do. You cover the LORD's altar with tears, with weeping and groaning because he no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand. But you say, "Why does he not?" Because the LORD was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant.

And this second thing you do. You cover the LORD's altar with tears, with weeping and groaning because he no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand. But you say, "Why does he not?" Because the LORD was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion (and look at this) and your wife by covenant.

Now what is God doing here? The people the Jews were complaining and even crying about the fact that they were offering up prayers and requests to God and He wasn't paying attention to their prayers, or offerings, and that sort of thing. And so the prophet Malachi is explaining the situation.

He says and there's another thing you guys do, you flood the Lord's altar with tears because He doesn't seem to respond to you. And you don't understand why, you're even asking why doesn't He respond? Well, I'll tell you why He, God's not responding. It's because He's acting as the witness. Did you catch that in that passage? He's acting as the witness.

What is the witness? Well, in our weddings today, we have witnesses. Usually it's the best man and the maid or matron of honor, doesn't necessarily have to be, but traditionally that's the way it is. But do you know that's a carry-over from centuries, centuries of covenants?

If you lived back in biblical times and you were going to make a covenant with someone. Let's say it was a covenant regarding the sale of property, for example. What you would do is you would come with the person with whom you were making the covenant to the city gate. That's where business was conducted in ancient times because the elders would sit in the city gate as witnesses.

And you would come and they'd say, well, what is your business today? And one say, well, I'm going to buy this gentleman's property. It's..., and then he explained where the property is. And then the next person, he said, okay, fine. And what are you going to pay for this property? Well, you've got two bags of gold, the weighing dah, dah, dah, three goats and two camels or something like that.

And the elders would witness the expression of this covenant. The relating of this covenant. They would watch the exchange of money and so forth. And that was essentially what today we call, the clerk of court. When we do things, or if there's a sale of something, I either go into the DMV or somewhere else. There's a title deed that I have to use. If it's a property issue, we do things. We record things today in different ways, but in ancient times, witnesses were key to covenants. Okay. Here's what we've lost. We've lost the role of the witness. Because it's more, just more or less traditional now.

There was a specific role that a witness had going back to that example I gave you of somebody selling some property. What if somebody came back later on and said, hey, I bought that property from such and such, or he bought this property for me and he didn't pay me the agreed amount. Well, the witnesses would rise up and they'd say no, we were there. We heard the terms of the covenant. We watched as you exchanged that exact amount. And we are witnesses to the fact that it was done properly. So you see, you have no ability to complain. That was the role of the witness. To rise up and say, wait a second, I was there, that's not what was said.

Now notice what God is saying through the prophet Malachi related to their marriages.

Malachi 2:13-14 (ESV)

And this second thing you do. You cover the LORD's altar with tears, with weeping and groaning because he no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand. But you say, "Why does he not?" Because the LORD was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant.

And this second thing you do. You cover the LORD's altar with tears, with weeping and groaning because he no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand. But you say, "Why does he not?" Because the LORD was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion (and look at this) and your wife by covenant.

He says, they're asking, why does the Lord not hear us? He says, because the Lord was witness between you and the wife of your youth. In fact, the NIV says the Lord is acting as the witness. Literally rising up.

The Lord is saying, wait a minute. I was there when you made promises one to another, when you made a vow, one to another, when you made a covenant between yourselves and Me, and this is not what you promised.

Wouldn't it be something if our witnesses today at weddings did that? If you were, have you ever stood up for anybody at a wedding? I've done it. If I stood up for my brother, I guess maybe that's the only one I ever did. I've officiated a lot of weddings, but I think I've only stood up for one. But can you imagine being the, if you start to see some problems or this couple starts talking about divorce or something like that, do you imagine as a witness going to that person and saying, wait a minute, I was there that day. I heard your vows.

You said till death do we part, good and bad times. What are you doing? What's going on here? A witness has the right. God is taking up that right in this passage of Malachi. And He's saying no, no, no. I was there and I heard the promises.

So we can see that God's intention for marriage, remember, that's the question that we're looking at. What did God intend? He intended this to be a binding covenant. Okay.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Sacredness of Marriage

Let's go on to the third one, and that is the Sacredness of Marriage. Well, there are several passages that speak about this, but when we talk about something being sacred, we're basically saying that God made it, and therefore it's special and set apart by Him. And it's not to be messed with because it's from God. It's sacred. We say the same thing about life. We call it, the sanctity of human life.

Well, there's also a sacredness or sanctity related to marriage, and it is expressed in several places throughout the scriptures. First in Hebrews chapter 13, verse 4, it says,

<p><u>Hebrews 13:4 (ESV)</u></p>

<p><i>Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.</i></p>

Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.

What do you see in this passage? Well, first of all, the writer of Hebrews says, marriage should be honored, it should be held in high esteem. Why? Because it's sacred. God made it. That's why. It's something, it's the same thing we say about human life. It should be held in high honor. It should be sacred. Right? And God even includes through this passage, a reminder that for those who ignore that sacredness, there is a judgment.

And then Paul writes about marriage actually in Romans chapter 7, verses 1 as we look at this passage. I want to just tell you that actually Paul isn't writing about marriage, he's writing about salvation. But he's using marriage as an example, and so we can learn something about God's intention for marriage from this passage where he says,

Romans 7:1-2 (ESV)

Or do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives? For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage.

Or do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives? For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage.

Well, we all know this. We, understand this. We know that if two people get married and one of them passes away, we know that she's free to remarry. That marriage is not something we carry on into heaven as Jesus explained to us. But what we often forget about this, is seeing this through the question of God's intention for marriage. God's intention was that it would be a lifelong commitment, a lifelong covenant.

Boy, when I was, when I got married, I was 20 years old. Probably had no business walking down the aisle with Sue at that time. I don't think, well, I know I didn't understand, and who of us does, or did or whatever. I didn't think about the implications, really.

This is for life. This is for the rest..., because when you're 20 years old, you can't think about the rest of your life. You're not thinking, you're bulletproof. You're going to live forever. And who knows? And it's all these older people

talk about things like this, but I don't really have time because it's just, I've got other things going on.

Well, now 45 years later, I have a whole different perspective on this concept of making this commitment that I've made to this woman. When I was 20 years old, I didn't think much about it. Today, I think about it and it gives me the shakes to think that I committed to her knowing so little, understanding so little about what it meant to commit the rest of my life to this person.

Boy, when I think about that, I think that means to God. This is a really important thing that it would demand my faithfulness for the rest of my life. And I'm in awe. I mean, today I'm in awe.

And then from Matthew chapter 19, you'll remember this. The Pharisees came up to Jesus to test Him with some questions. And they said,

Matthew 19:3-6 (ESV)

And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."

And Pharisees came up to (Jesus to test) him (with some questions) and tested him by asking, (and asked Him) "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" (and) He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."

Now this is great because now here Jesus is commenting on the passage we looked at the very beginning when we talked about the origin of marriage and He's expanding on it. And He's answering the question once and for all, what about this idea of divorcing your wife for any and every reason.

Because there was a faction of the Jews at that time that believed that a man had the right to divorce his wife, or put her away as they called it really for any reason, including he just didn't happen to find her attractive anymore, or she burnt dinner. He could say that's it, and all he had to do was write her a certificate of divorce, and give it to her in the front of two, or three witnesses.

And that's it. I'm good to go. I can go find somebody else. And yet there were also a faction of the Jews that held to this idea, just as Jesus is expressing it, that when you get married, you're married for life. And what God has joined together, let man not separate.

But I love how Jesus says it there because His commentary is above anybody else's. When Jesus comments on something, you're getting it from the heart and mouth of God. And that's what I like about this. He says a man shall leave his father and mother. Now that's another interesting sort of an insight into God's intention for marriage. A man shall leave his father and mother.

I thought about this for a while. I've known people over the years who've been able to live, get married, come out from under their, his parents authority, home, roof, whatever, marry a woman. And even though he may live in close proximity with his parents, he's still able to leave. And I think you know what I mean by, leave his father and mother.

It's important to understand that when a marriage couple, when a couple comes together in marriage, they are creating a new home. This is a new home that's being created at every single marriage ceremony. It's a new family.

And by the way, I always tell couples when I'm doing pre marriage counseling, don't ever catch yourself saying, well, we're going to get married and then we're going to start a family. No. You start a family the day you get married, you are a new family. Children don't make a family. A husband and a wife make a family. Children are added to the family.

And if you think, well, pastor Paul, aren't you dancing on the head of a pin here? I mean, what's the big deal? Well, it's a big deal. If couples believe that children make a family, then guess what happens when the kids grow up and leave home, the family breaks up, and the couple starts looking at each other like what's the reason for even sticking around?

Do you know that couples do break up often after the kids grow up and leave home? And sometimes that's because of what we call child centered parenting, where the kids make the family. We're going to get married and then we're going to start a family. No, you started a family already when you said, I do. A new family was created.

A man will leave his father and mother, and be united to his wife, and the two shall be a family. And God says they're going to be one flesh. And that's another fascinating term. One flesh. When I think about that, I think that's really

interesting. I actually share more DNA with my children than I do my wife. And yet it doesn't ever refer in the Bible to my relationship to my children as one flesh, but to my wife, it does.

And we know that there are implications to that statement that go beyond the institution of marriage that reflect on Christ and the church. But the point is, God sees your relationship as one flesh. That's how sacred it is, and that's amazing.

And Jesus says, here's His comment for all time. *“What... God has joined together, let not man separate.”* I mean, that's a pretty powerful statement. Marriage is ordained by God. And it deserves the utmost respect and honor. We have to ask the question, do we see that today in our culture? Absolutely not. We see the opposite.

I hear from people a lot. I mean, every week, couples writing, or one of the, the woman or the man writing and saying, well, we've been together for 12 years, but he refuses to get married. And there's all kinds of reasons and all kinds of excuses. And some of them I even get from the standpoint of people have seen a lot of bad marriages and somehow they think that if they make that jump into marriage, their relationship is going to go flat too and so forth and...

But ultimately what they're doing is they're expressing an attitude toward marriage that is dishonoring to the sacredness of the institution by simply living together out of wedlock. It is so powerful that only death can break it. That's pretty powerful.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Order of Marriage

And then finally, we come to the Order of Marriage. We're going to talk about the fact that it shouldn't surprise us, when God creates, everything that He creates is in order. We know that God is not a God of disorder. That's what Paul writes in 1 Corinthians chapter 14, our God is not a God of disorder. That means that when He creates, everything is orderly. That's why Paul says in the church, things are to be done in an orderly fashion. Why? Because that's consistent with the nature of God and marriage was created with order.

So many times in marriage, we invite chaos by ignoring once again, the manufacturer's specifications. How we're to maintain this thing, how we're to treat one another, how we're to respond to one another and so forth. How we even see our role as husband and wife. We create chaos.

Listen when things are going wrong in our marriages and believe me, I understand about things going wrong in marriages. I've told you guys many times over the years, the first five years of our marriage was not good because we were not walking with the Lord. We didn't attend church. We weren't reading our Bibles. We weren't patterning our marriage after anything God said in His Word. And after five years, we were that quintessential car sitting on the side of the road with the hood up and smoke billowing out of the engine compartment. We were dead on the road.

We ignored God. We had chaos in our marriage when God intended there to be order. And He'd given us that outline of order in His Word, we ignored it. We completely ignored it. Well, it's something we just can't ignore even if we're uncomfortable with some of the ideas that God expresses when He talks about order. Let's look at some of the passages. The first is Ephesians chapter 5, verse 23, and this one is a head scratcher. He says that,

Ephesians 5:23 (ESV)

...the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.

...the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.

We learned something about the order of the relationship in marriage, and that is that God created the man to function in this role of headship within the home. And I call this a head scratcher because I still to this day, I have a hard time figuring out why he picked the man because as, we men...

I mean, I walked into my marriage completely oblivious to this whole concept and never honored it at all for the first five years and then spend about the next 10 years just figuring it out. About how to put it into practice, because it just, it didn't seem to come naturally in a lot of ways, but the husband is the head of the wife, wow.

What exactly does that even mean? Well, He says he's head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. Well, I simply, I certainly don't feel qualified like Jesus is the head of the church, to be the head of my family, and yet that's what He says.

So we learned something else about something that happens at a marriage ceremony, an ordination takes place. When two people come together, the man is ordained as the head of the home, the head of his wife.

How many men walk into marriage with that understanding? How many are even told by the pastor, hey, listen, on the day you get married, when you say I do to this woman on that day, you walk in, you step into this role of headship with this woman. Are you prepared for that role? Do you know what that role is all about? We're going to talk about it by the way, in some future sessions. But do you understand that role?

I think that the vast majority of men have absolutely no concept of what it means to walk in some aspect of headship or leadership within the home. And most of them wouldn't even know how to define it. And most women don't even want to admit it. Because what they see when they look at passages that speak of the headship of the man, which by the way, are often expressed by telling the woman to walk in an attitude of submission toward that headship, most of them just roll their eyes and think, yeah, right over my dead body.

Because they see headship as this authoritarian sort of heavy handedness in the home where the man says jump and she's required to say how high. Which has nothing to do with biblical headship, but that's often the sort of an idea that goes along with it. And that's one of the reasons that this thing has been completely rejected and often by Christians as well. Men are unwilling to walk in a role of headship and women are unwilling to submit to a role of headship on behalf of her husband. I've had Christian women, I heard Christian women say, oh, that submission thing, no, no, no, not happening here.

Well, they don't understand because they're applying a worldly definition of what it means to walk in an attitude of respect and submission toward what God has called the man to do and to be within the home and because they misunderstand, they invite chaos. They ignore the order.

They ignore the order that God created in marriage and chaos ensues. And you can't get around it. If we're going to ignore the Word of God, chaos is going to ensue in our homes. It's as simple as that. Like I said, in almost 45 years of marriage, I can tell you, every single time Sue and I have had a problem, a discussion that became heated, a flat out argument or a problem, whatever, it was because we ignored God's order in the home. One or the other of us, or both.

It's always comes down to us. We can't point to other people and say, this or that or the other thing. It's us. We have to look at our own lives, our own responses to one another, and our response most importantly to God, and His Word. And that's one of the reasons why I tell couples, when they come to me

and say, we're having marriage problems, I say, no, you're not. You're having obedience problems. You see, that's really what's at the root of this whole thing.

We call them marriage problems because that's a convenient way of pushing it away from my own particular area of responsibility. When Sue and I are having issues in our marriage, it's because of a lack of obedience, pure and simple to the order that God has established in the home. Pure and simple. 1 Corinthians chapter 11 goes on. Paul writes and he says,

1 Corinthians 11:3 (ESV)

...I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.

...I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.

So once again, the apostle speaks of this role of headship. Ladies, I want to remind you of something. Your husband did not take on this role of headship on his own. He didn't decide one day when you got married, I'm going to function in the role of the head. He was given that position by God. He was ordained by God. He was literally thrust into that position.

And like I said, most men don't want to be in it. In fact, most men, I'll tell you this. Oh, I got to be careful. Is most men accurate? I don't know. I guess I don't have the ability to say most. I'll say a good healthy number of men are so uncomfortable with the idea of being a head in the home, or walking in that role of headship, that they will abdicate that role to the wife.

And here's what's interesting about what I've seen about wives. Most wives are pretty responsible creatures and when they see their husband drop the ball on something, they'll usually pick it up because, well, for various different reasons, because they realize if he doesn't do it, nobody will, unless I do. So women will often take up the responsibility that their husbands leave behind, even if it's the role of headship within the home, and she will function in that role.

And depending on her personality and the strength of her constitution, she will be able to function in that role for a period of time. Some women can do it for a long time. Some can't, but it will eventually drag her down. I don't care how strong she is, eventually it will drag her down because the woman was not created to be the head. She was created to come alongside the head.

And if she functions in the head, and he allows her to function as the head, and she carries on and does that over a protracted period of time, she will eventually burn out, become resentful, and that's often when they end up sitting down with me saying, we've got marriage problems. And so we have to kind of work through the whole thing, and we have to find out where the breakdown really took place. And often it comes to this very issue.

The husband was uncomfortable with some area of his role of headship. Didn't feel qualified, didn't feel equipped and so he just dropped it. He just didn't do it. And we men were kind of interesting that way. I say interesting, I'm being polite.

When we are faced with a responsibility for which we feel ill equipped, we often will say, no, you do it. And one of the reasons for that is that men are occupational and we derive a great sense of our self-worth from what we do, our occupation. And therefore, if our occupation includes doing something I'm ill equipped to do, I'm going to say, no, I don't want to do that because I'm basically threatening my own sense of self-worth. And so I'll just drop...

Whether it's doing the finances in the family or parenting the kids, disciplining the children, or saying, we need to get to church on Sunday, or being in charge of family devotions. Or however many other things that the man may be called and equipped, or told, encouraged by the Lord to do, but he feels ill equipped to do, he will simply say, no, I'm not going to do those. And the wife picks them up and she just begins to do it because normally she's the more responsible of the two when it comes to some of those areas.

I don't mean to berate my own gender, but that's, there. It is. Some women do it out of fear. They pick up the things that the man was equipped or told to do out of fear. They're afraid, if I don't do it, it won't get done. And pretty soon the sheriff's going to be at our door, and want our furniture, and our car, and so on and so forth. So she'll do things, whatever it takes to kind of keep the family running.

And the husband will look back or kind of sit back and kind of say, oh, well, it's getting done. And he'll step back from the thing and think everything's looking great. And then she has this breakdown, emotional, sometimes physical, literally breakdown, because again, her shoulders weren't equipped to be the head of the home. God didn't create her for that, and he's sitting around going, I thought things were great. I don't know what her problem is. We were doing fantastic and suddenly she just wiggled out.

No, actually this was a long time coming because you ignored the order of marriage as it was expressed in God's Word and you moved beyond that. And you began to function and become comfortable in your chaos. And eventually the storm winds rose to a point where you couldn't deny it any longer.

Sue and I were born and raised in Minnesota. We saw, and we're in a lot of tornadoes in our days because Minnesota is at the top of tornado alley. Starts down in Texas and makes its way up that center core of the United States. And I learned as a young kid what caused tornadoes when two weather systems collided and got out of order, it's literally the weather patterns getting out of order.

Order is that hot air rises, cold air stays below. But when two systems warm and cold collide and they push themselves in ways that are contrary to nature and order, it creates a tornado. And I've seen the devastation from tornadoes firsthand and the devastation that takes place in a marriage is very similar. A lot of debris, a lot of loss because we got out of order.

Now that we understand and have a better sense of what God intended for marriage by looking at these four areas, now we can begin to build upon this foundation and investigate the roles that God has called the husband and wife to.

And next week when we get together, we're going to look at the ministry calling of the husband and the ministry calling of the wife within the home. And I'm using that word ministry very purposefully.

I believe that when you get married, your first ministry is to your spouse. That is your ministry, and if that ministry isn't squared away, you have no business ministering in the church.

That's your first ministry and God wants that ministry to be in order, in order for you to continue. And so we will address those issues next time when we come together.