

God's Good Design for Gender, Marriage, and Sexuality

Main Passage: Genesis 1:26–31; Genesis 2:18–24

Introduction—There's Good Worth Fighting For

In *The Lord of the Rings*, Sam says: "There's some good in this world, Mr. Frodo. And it's worth fighting for." He says this when everything seems broken. Yet even there, he remembers what is good.

We live in a world where so much – for example, gender, marriage, and sexuality—feels broken and confusing. But we look back to the beginning—to God's good design—to remember who we are and celebrate what God calls beautiful.

Created in Love: Male and Female

(Genesis 1:27; Genesis 2:18–24; Psalm 139:13–14)

The Bible says, "*God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*" This tells us three truths: we are made in God's image, every person has dignity and value, and we are embodied—our bodies matter.

Your body is not a mistake. God made you male or female on purpose, and He called it "*very good.*" Being male or female is part of God's original, good design—it existed before sin entered the world.

In Genesis 2, God said it was "*not good*" for the man to be alone. So He made a woman to be his helper. The word "helper" does not mean inferior. It means ally and partner—equal in value but different in role.

When Adam saw Eve, he said: "*This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.*" Then God established marriage: "*A man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.*" This is a lifelong promise between one man and one woman.

We all struggle to see ourselves as God sees us. For some, this involves gender identity. For others, it is different. But the truth is the same: God made you on purpose. Psalm 139 says, "*You*

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formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I am fearfully and wonderfully made." Your identity is a gift from God who knows you better than you know yourself.

Two Good Gifts: Marriage and Singleness

(Genesis 2:24; 1 Corinthians 7:7–9, 32–35)

God has given us two equally good gifts: marriage and singleness. Marriage is between one man and one woman, for life. Singleness means serving Christ without marriage. Both are holy.

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 7, *"Each has his own gift from God."* Marriage and singleness are both gifts. Single people can focus fully on serving God. Jesus was single. Paul was single. Both lived full, joyful lives.

If you are single, you are complete in Christ. The church must honor single people, not treat them as second-class. Singleness is a gift that allows undivided devotion to God.

Sin distorts both gifts. In marriage, sin twists the roles of husbands and wives. Some people use Bible verses about submission and headship to justify control or abuse. That is completely wrong.

Biblical headship means the husband leads by sacrificing, just as Christ gave His life for the church. It is about laying down your life so your wife can flourish. Biblical submission does not mean being passive or tolerating abuse. It means partnering with a husband who loves and serves you.

God designed these roles before sin. After the fall, God gave the woman pain in childbirth and the man hard work in providing. When culture tells women they must lead in both home and church, it puts both burdens on them. God's design protects women from carrying a weight He never asked them to carry.

Called into Holiness and Grace

(1 Corinthians 6:9–20; Revelation 21:1–5)

Many people wrestle with same-sex attraction, gender confusion, or other sexual sins. You are not alone. These are painful results of the fall, but they do not put anyone beyond God's grace.

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Paul lists sins in 1 Corinthians 6, including sexual immorality and homosexuality. But then he says, "And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." Your past does not define you. Christ does.

The gospel transforms us. Sometimes our desires change. Sometimes they do not. Many Christians struggle lifelong with same-sex attraction, just as others struggle with greed or anger. But even when desires do not change, our identity always does. You are not defined by your desires. You are defined by Christ.

Sam Allberry, a pastor who experiences same-sex attraction but lives celibate, says, *"My desires for things God has forbidden are a reflection of how sin has distorted me, not how God has made me."*

Rosaria Butterfield was a professor in a lesbian relationship. When Jesus saved her, she lost almost everything. She said, *"Jesus triumphed. And I was a broken mess... But the voice of God sang a love song in the rubble of my world." The cost is real. But Jesus is worth it.*

The gospel is costly for everyone. Jesus said, *"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily."* Following Jesus means saying no to ourselves and yes to Him.

The church must be the safest place for people who struggle. Most people with same-sex attraction do not leave the church because they were told it is a sin. They leave because they were treated as outsiders, as if their sin was uniquely unforgivable, or made them different. Whenever we do that, we must repent. Yes, same-sex activity is sin. But we speak this truth with tenderness and love.

Gender dysphoria—when someone feels their body does not match who they are inside—is real suffering. But the path forward requires trusting that God knows us better than we know ourselves. To reject the body God gave you is saying "I know better than You." That is idolatry.

But we all commit idolatry when we put ourselves above God. The good news is that God does not leave us there. He meets us in our pain and transforms us. The church must walk with those who struggle—offering friendship, love, and hope. There is grace for those who fall. We welcome strugglers. We bear each other's burdens.

Conclusion – God Will Make All Things New

We began by saying, "There's some good in this world. And it's worth fighting for." What God made good, He will make new.

Revelation 21 says, "*Behold, I am making all things new.*" Not all new things—all things new. God is redeeming.

Until that day, we walk together—confessing sins, bearing burdens, extending grace. Jesus saves sinners. All kinds. Even us.

Here is what we do now:

First: Receive God's design as a gift. Thank God for how He made you.

Second: Walk in grace and holiness. When you fall short, run to Jesus. When others fall short, extend grace.

Third: Extend Christlike compassion. Be a church where strugglers confess without shame. When someone shares their struggle, say "I love you" and "you're welcome here."

Fourth: Live in light of future restoration. One day, our bodies will be raised, our desires pure, every tear wiped away. What you sacrifice for Jesus is never wasted.

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Discussion Questions

1. **We have emphasized that our bodies are not mistakes but part of God's "very good" design.** How does this truth challenge or reshape the cultural narrative that identity is something we construct ourselves? In what areas of life (beyond gender and sexuality) might we be tempted to see ourselves differently than God sees us?
2. **Paul calls both marriage and singleness "gifts" in 1 Corinthians 7, yet our culture—and sometimes our churches—treat them very differently.** What practical steps could a church community take to genuinely honor singleness as an equal gift? How might married people unintentionally marginalize singles, and what would it look like to treat them as true family?
3. **The bible describes biblical headship as covenantal responsibility where husbands are called to sacrificially serve and even die for their wives, modeled after Christ.** How does this vision of servant leadership differ from what the world calls leadership? For those who are married or considering marriage, what would it look like in practice for a husband to "lay down his life" in everyday decisions?
4. **Sam Allberry said, "My desires for things God has forbidden are a reflection of how sin has distorted me, not how God has made me."** This applies to all of us, not just those wrestling with same-sex attraction or gender identity. What desires or struggles in your own life reveal the distorting effect of sin? How does understanding yourself as defined by Christ rather than your desires change the way you approach ongoing temptations?
5. **How can the church be to be "the safest place for strugglers" while also holding to biblical truth about sexuality and gender?** How can we practically create communities where people feel safe to confess struggles without shame, while still maintaining a commitment to holiness? What does it look like to genuinely love someone—to say "I love you" and "you're welcome here"—when you disagree with their choices or identity claims?