

## They Shall Be One Flesh : Fulfilling the Ideal of Creation through the Family

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Social scientists are asking theologians to help them. In their own words, they want religious leaders to work out a fuller theology of marriage. [1] There are two basic reasons for this unusual phenomenon. First, there is a mountain of scientific evidence [2] in published literature over the past few decades, [3] that documents the value of marriage and family. The data supporting the personal and social benefits of marital unions is overwhelming and indisputable. Second, sociologists know the religious voice, which sets social norms and moral standards, is too important and too powerful a social force to be sidelined or silenced.

Maggie Gallagher, in a paper delivered at the Interreligious and International Federation for World Peace [IIFWP] *Assembly 2000* titled *The Moral and Social Significance of Marriage in the Global Context*, could hardly have stated it any stronger when she said that there is powerful [cross-cultural] evidence, not just that marriage is important to society, but that human beings are in some basic sense made to be married. [4] In his book, *Why Marriage Matters: Reasons to Believe in Marriage in Postmodern Society*, author Glenn Stanton concurs by noting, All the data presented in this book points to one conclusion: Lifelong, monogamous marriage matters, and matters deeply, in the lives of adults, children, and societies. [5]

In a major statement by 13 prominent sociologists, researchers, marriage counselors, and family-life educators, [6] data was compared in five areas: 1) the family, 2) economics, 3) physical health and longevity, 4) mental health and emotional well-being, and 5) crime and domestic violence. In unanimity they too agreed, Our fundamental conclusion: Marriage is an important social good, associated with an impressively broad array of positive outcomes for children and adults alike. [7]

The data is unarguable: marriage is so valuable that social scientists cannot remain silent as this most basic institution is debated and devalued. This is why they are pushing their theological kin to weigh in loud and clear in the debate on marriage. This clarion call is not only because of the numerous, positive benefits that are derived from successful families, but also because of the documented damage resulting from families that fracture or fail to form. Stanton acknowledged that sociologists

understand the comprehensive negative consequences of marital breakdown and what it does to those involved [and this] is why [they] must rage against this cultural trend away from marriage. *It is bad, not because it fails to live up to some nostalgic ideal, but because it hurts people.* [Italics original] [8]

Hence, sociologists have the scientific evidence to say, with unquestionable certainty, that marriage plays a significant role in personal development, social stability, economic prosperity, and national civility. They, therefore, stand on solid ground in soliciting theologians to come up with a complementary religious framework that unequivocally supports society's most fundamental institutions.

### **A Double Message:**

Within the New Testament, there are two different standards on marriage and sexuality. One is pro-marriage; the other pro-celibacy. The letter to the Hebrews unhesitatingly supports marriage.

Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage be undefiled; for God will judge the immoral and adulterous. (Heb. 13:4)

On the other hand, in Paul's letter to the Corinthians celibacy is held in higher esteem than marriage. Marriage almost appears to be an opt-out for the weak.

He who marries his betrothed does well; and he who refrains from marriage will do better. For it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion. (I Cor. 7:38, 9)

A mixed message can be a problem, in the religious realm as in any field. Andrew Tanenbaum in his book, *Computer Networks*, points out competing standards become a source of confusion, division, obsolescence, and duplication of effort instead of an enhancement to usefulness. [9]

The philosophical argument behind America's debate over sex education in public schooling likewise revolves on the issue of an apparent mixed message: Is the message of abstinence until marriage diluted if teens are also taught the proper use of condoms as a safety net? In other words, does a mixed message—stay abstinent and learn to use a condom—influence a teenager's commitment to sexual purity? In *The Effectiveness of Abstinence Education Programs in Reducing Sexual Activity Among Youth*, Robert Rector of The Heritage Foundation states categorically that a mixed or double message, substantially weakens an admonition against early non-marital sexual activity. [10]

Likewise, does the theological double message—honor marriage, but it is better to be celibate—weaken the canonical commitment to marriage? Apparently sociologists think so.

### **The Original Paradigm**

How can theologians speak candidly in support of the institution of marriage? How should they work out a fuller theology of marriage? Stanton points us in the right direction by acknowledging the origin of the problem. Our [ability to] love is sure to be imperfect because we, as lovers living in the fallen shadow of humanity's original parents, are imperfect. [11] Let's start there with our first human ancestors.

In the Garden of Eden, our Creator laid out three broad goals. Genesis 1:28 states that God blessed Adam and Eve, directing them to: 1) be fruitful, 2) multiply, and 3) have dominion over creation. God also gave our first human ancestors very specific objectives and a methodology for accomplishing these ideals.

Therefore, shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh. (Gen. 2:24)

This particular verse can be compared to the objectives in the mission statement of a business enterprise. They are specific and measurable; they drive the clarity of vision, the depth of thinking, and the details of a strategic plan. Steven Covey says in the *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* that a successful person begins with the end in mind. God wanted Adam and Eve to be successful, so He gave them the final goal first. There are three reasons for positing that Genesis 2:24 is a heavenly axiom outlining God's method for achieving His purpose of creation.

First, this verse appears *before* the fall of man. The fall occurs in the third chapter of Genesis; this heavenly axiom is in chapter two. Theologically, Genesis 2 is also called the second creation story, complementing Genesis 1 which chronicles the six days of creation and concludes with God making man in his image, male and female. (Gen. 1:27) Genesis 2, on the other hand, provides another story of creation, beginning in verse 4: This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created. Here God created man from the dust of the ground, breathed into him His spirit, and man became a living being. (Gen 2:7) Eve was created to stand side-by-side with Adam because it was not good that he be alone. (Gen. 2:8) The point is that Genesis 2:24 is part of the second chapter of Genesis and therefore part of what is called the second creation narrative. It is not part of the fall.

Examining the next verse, Genesis 2:25, lends further strength to this argument. This is the very last verse in the second chapter of Genesis and, in essence, builds a firewall between the ideals of creation set out in the first and second chapters of Genesis and the tragedy of the fall described in chapter 3. The verse reads, And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed. Clearly, Adam and Eve were in their original, pre-fallen state.

The second rationale supporting Genesis 2:24 as a heavenly axiom is drawn from the fact that it is one of the most repeated verses in the Bible. This verse is repeated, nearly verbatim, four times: first in the Old Testament (Gen. 2:24), twice by Jesus in the Gospels (Matt. 19:5 and Mark 10:7-8), and once in St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians (5:31). It is also referenced in two other places: in Malachi 2:15 (Old Testament) and in I Corinthians 6:16 (New Testament). Why, then, is this verse referred to a half dozen times?

This question can be answered by asking an easier question, Why do parents repeat themselves? After all, God's heart and love is that of a parent. Anyone who has raised children knows the need for repetition. Parents repeat themselves for two reasons. First, their children did not understand or hear what they were told the first time it was said. Second, parents repeat themselves because what they said was important. If a child gets it the first time, then there is no need for it being repeated. Also, if it was not really important then it would not need repeating, even if the child didn't get it. So God repeated the content of Gen. 2:24 four times and referenced it another two times, making it one of the most frequently repeated verses, because: 1) we did not get it, and 2) it is important. How important? It is directly related to the original purpose of creation—the reason God created us.

Third, Genesis 2:24 outlines the final goal of Adam and Eve because it is part of the original packaging, so to speak. Any potentially dangerous appliance comes with both warning labels<sup>¶</sup> usually printed in red<sup>¶</sup> and an instruction manual. God our Maker and our Creator, cautioned Adam and Eve adequately and gave them detailed directions.

In the case of Adam and Eve, the warning labels are found in Genesis 2:17, which reads, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die. The Divine Principle teaches that this verse is a warning not to misuse love.<sup>[12]</sup> Like any warning label, the language is terse, prohibitive (i.e., Do not& ), and precedes more detailed instructions.

Following the prohibitions (i.e., the don'ts), God gave the instruction manual (the dos). Its language is instructive, more detailed, and affirmative. The instruction manual<sup>¶</sup> Gen. 2:24<sup>¶</sup> has three parts to it, namely:

- a) Leave your father and mother
- b) Cleave to your wife (spouse), and
- c) They (the two) shall become one flesh

Genesis 2:17<sup>¶</sup> the warning, and 2:24<sup>¶</sup> the instruction manual, complement each other. They were given to our first ancestors not only to prevent their fall, but also to guide their growth to maturity. This is relevant here because if Adam and Eve had heeded God's warnings and followed His instructions, then the fall would have never occurred. God never wanted the fall to happen. Never.

In review, the three reasons Genesis 2:24 describes God's original ideal for Adam and Eve are: 1) it appears before and is therefore unrelated to the fall, 2) it is one of the most repeated Bible verses, and 3) it complements God's warning found in Gen. 2:17 indicating that God never intended for His children to fall. With this sense of importance and urgency, let's explore the meaning behind Gen. 2:24, examining each of the three parts separately.

### **1) Leave Your Father and Mother**

This is the first part, Gen. 2:24a. To leave your father and mother means, implicitly, you must be living with them. You cannot leave your parents if you are not already living with them. So why did God want us to grow up living together in families?

The sociological data leaves no doubt that stable families add value to the lives of individuals (both parents and children) as well as to the larger society. Children from intact families do better in school, are less likely to engage in delinquent or criminal behavior, and more likely to be productive, contributing members of society.<sup>[13]</sup> The converse is also true: children fare poorly without the loving environment of a family. Stanton puts it in crude broad strokes, and the statistical evidence supports his generalization that while boys without fathers [more likely] turn to guns and crime, girls without fathers seem to turn to having babies. <sup>[14]</sup> Other studies support this and acknowledge the importance of marriage to parenting:

Two adult parents are more likely to remain together and raise their children if the adults are married& Marriage continues to benefit the participating adults (better health, higher measures of socio-economic

status, etc.), but also protects adolescents from sexual activity and its associated risks.[15]

But the focus of this paper is not sociological, it is theological. So what is the theological justification for growing up within a family?

The loving two-parent family is, in many ways, like a womb. Both protect and nourish; both are temporary residences where the child, or fetus, prepares for life outside that special incubator-like environment. The analogy between the womb of a mother and the love of parents can also be understood in the selection of words. The Bible uses the language of childbirth, saying we are to leave our father and mother. It helps to understand this using the analogy of when a baby leaves its mother's womb. At the time of birth two things occur: a physical relocation and a metamorphosis. The fetus moves outside the uterus (a relocation) and at the same time is transformed to a newborn baby that must now live and breathe on its own. In the birthing process, the relocation does not sever the relationship between the mother and child, their bond actually grows deeper. In other words, leaving is more metamorphic than residential.

Therefore, when the Bible says that a child leaves his parents, like childbirth, it is speaking primarily about a transformation, not a new address and phone number. Leaving, in this sense, means a change in position from that of son or daughter to that of a husband or wife. Traditionally a child leaves home at the time of marriage, and through taking on new marital responsibilities he or she is also transformed. The conjugal relationship is a powerful force that reshapes men and women into husbands and wives, and their union is the anchor of a loving marriage. Sociologist Linda Waite from the University of Chicago put it this way, "It's the role of husband, not boyfriend or father, which seems to be key: Having children by itself does not work the same transformation [as marriage] in men's lives." [16]

Marriage, therefore, is the birth of a new family. And like childbirth, it is in many ways a life-and-death situation, thus drawing the support of the entire family together. Additionally, just as the bond between the mother and child deepens after the fetus leaves the womb, allowing the father to be directly involved in the care of the newborn for the first time, so too the parent-child relationship grows when children leave home. Parents play a primary role in helping support and stabilize the new marital union. And as everyone knows, they have a vested interest in the success of the newlyweds as they await with great anticipation the coming of grandchildren.

The heart of parents acts like a *womb of love*; it not only nurtures children, it also protects them. An article in the *American Educator* magazine discussed the protective nature of the father-daughter relationship. In a research project that studied 253 Baltimore girls it was noted that 25 percent surveyed had a child before they were 19 years old, but *not one* who had a good relationship with a live-in father had a baby (italics original).[17] An absentee father was a destabilizing factor, especially in the lives of young girls, because those with close relationships with a *residential* father or long-term stepfather simply did not follow the teenage mommy track (italics original).[18] The report emphasized the residential aspect, since a close relationship with a father not living at home did not help. [19]

The love of a father protects his daughter for two reasons. First, the child is loved. Therefore, she is not starving for masculine attention and, consequently, vulnerable. Secondly, she has a litmus test, a clear standard. If a boy tries to sweet talk her, saying,

I love you, she'll know what that means. She can ask, When you use this word I love, I know what it means. My father married my mother and is committed to make their marriage work. Is that what you mean when you use the I love word?

Research by Linda Waite and Maggie Gallagher warns that the trendy myth, i.e., that there are no consequences if young people live together outside the bonds of marriage, misses the mark. Cohabitation, say the co-authors of *The Case for Marriage*, not only deprives people of the benefits of marriage now, but it makes it at least somewhat less likely they will achieve a successful marriage in the future. [20]

There is another interesting aside to the analogy of the family as the womb of love. While intrauterine, the fetus grows physically preparing to breathe and live on its own at birth. It does not actually breathe on its own until birth, even though it is fully prepared and capable. In the womb of our mothers, our bodies grow physically; inside the womb of our parents' love we are growing spiritually, specifically we are developing our ability to love. Accordingly, just as the first breath is taken only upon birth, so too the first conjugal love should be experienced only after we *leave our father and mother*, i.e., at the time of marriage. Justifying pre-marital sex as a trial run to make sure everything works, is like saying a fetus should try breathing inside the womb to be sure the lungs work properly.

How then does a child develop the ability to love without actually experiencing love? To answer this question, it is first necessary to realize that there are four fundamental expressions, or spheres, of love. They are: filial piety (children to parents), sibling love (brother and sister), conjugal love or fidelity (husband and wife), and parental love (parents to children). The family is where all of these loves are most easily and naturally learned and most fully experienced. Additionally, being raised in a family is vital because this is where the standard for the proper use of human sexuality is established, meaning, sex is only between a husband and wife (not between parents and children, nor between brothers and sisters).

Of the four spheres of love there are two broad categories: social (public) love and sexual (private) love. Social love consists of parental love, sibling love and filial piety. These three form the basis for all interpersonal relationships in society. For example, we should love older people as our own parents or grandparents. We should treat people of the same age as we would our own brothers and sisters. And we should love those younger than us as younger siblings.

Sexual love, in contrast, does not form part of the spectrum of social relationships. In other words, sexual intercourse is not a form of social love. Human sexuality should be reserved for marriage because it is the means by which a couple forms a unique love that has the potential of bonding them together in the image of God, as will be explained more fully later. The marital union, therefore, is not only where sex is safe, but also sacred.

So, yes, children need to experience love and learn how to love prior to marriage. But the fundamental dynamics of love—receiving, giving and sharing—are learned within familial relationships, the social loves. Through the love *from* their parents, children can learn the

unconditional nature of love and how to receive love; through the love *for* their parents they can learn the selfless giving of love; and through brotherly and sisterly relationships they learn sharing love. In addition, through the example of their parents, children learn the intimate and private nature of the conjugal relationship.

In summary, to *leave your father and mother* is a birthing process<sup>¶</sup> the birth of a new family. The newly married couples form another link in the chain of an ancestral lineage. This would create a family tree<sup>¶</sup> or what Terry Hargrave calls a braided cord [21] of interconnected generations. Not only interrelated through shared genetic traits, such families are interconnected through legacies of love inherited from their ancestors and bequeathed to future generations. If there had been no fall, this lineage of love would weave back through time, all the way back to our original human ancestors, Adam and Eve, and even to God.

When Adam and Eve fell, the consequences went far beyond breaking their own individual relationship with God, or even the tragedies in their immediate family. It meant that every person born from this Adamic lineage would inherit a defective standard of love. This is why the Bible teaches, For as in Adam all die& (I Cor. 15:22)

It is here that we begin to see Adam and Eve's unique situation as the original parents of humankind. Their position was critical because the family is the *womb of love*, and Adam and Eve were to set the prototypes of the four spheres of love. In terms of lineage-building, our first human ancestors should have been the anchor, or first link in the chain of lineage, connecting us to God. Seen from this perspective, setting the right tradition of love was imperative. In I John 4:8 we read, Whoever does not love, does not know God, because God is love. God wanted us to love one another so we could experience love in our families and societies, and with this heart and conscience more easily come to know Him. We were created to live in loving families because this is the most natural environment to learn to love and, as a result, the best foundation to know the loving heart of God.

In a word, *leaving your father and mother* means the continuity of the lineage and legacy of true love.

## 2) Cleave to Your Wife (Spouse)

Next, what does the second part of Gen. 2:24 mean? The word *cleave* is an old English word, meaning to hold fast, to be unwavering. The example that comes to mind is 6-year-old Elian Gonzales cleaving to an inner tube for nearly three days while floating alone in the Gulf of Mexico after the boat of Cuban refugees that he and his mother were on sank the night of November 22, 1999. While floating on the inner tube he didn't just hold on; he held on for dear life; he *cleaved* to the tube. Literally it was a life-and-death situation. If young Elian had let go, he would have died. It was that simple and that treacherous.

Therefore, when the Bible says to *cleave to your wife (spouse)* it means that the conjugal love between spouses is rather like a life-and-death relationship. But why so absolute? Why does the love between a husband and wife have to be so, well, uncompromising? There's no wiggle room! Why should the marriage commitment be so steadfast?

Understanding God's purpose for marriage will help answer that question, and Mrs. Moon addressed this in her 16-city tour across America in 1996. She explained,

We marry in order to resemble God. God exists as a being of dual characteristics. Thus, husband and wife united return to God. Together, they are a reflection of His original image & We need marriage because it is the way to develop true love. [22]

In essence, she is saying marriage serves two purposes: 1) to reflect God's nature, and 2) to develop true love. Here the first point will be considered. The second part will be discussed in the next section.

The theological base for positing that marriage allows us to reflect God's image is Genesis 1:27. It reads, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." The first eight words of this Bible passage fueled a revolution; in fact, several. This was used to justify self-rule by the 13 original colonies when Thomas Jefferson wrote in the *Declaration of Independence*,

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal. But it didn't stop there. The Civil War leading to Abraham Lincoln's *Emancipation Proclamation*, the civil rights movement of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the women's rights movement all tapped into the biblically inspired phrase *created equal* before our Maker. Equality before God is a powerful image, divinely inspired.

However, it is time to revisit this verse and look more closely at the second part, the last fourteen words which read, "in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." This says that the image of God, after which humankind is created, consists of both masculinity and femininity.

In fact, it is not self-evident that all people were *created equal*, as Jefferson suggested. Yes, this concept is biblically based, but like many religious ideals it needs to be taken on faith. Without intending any disregard for the Founding Fathers, our equality is not readily self-apparent. The differences are many: gender, skin color, stature, disposition, race, social status and intellectual gifts, to name a few. Jefferson would have been more correct to say, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all things are created in pairs." Look around. Not only are human beings created male and female, but everything in creation is created in complementary pairs: buck and doe, cock and hen, drone and queen bee, stamen and pistil, etc. It's even in the molecular world: proton and electron, cation and anion, positive and negative charges.

Why are the paired partnerships of male and female (or positive and negative) so ubiquitous? Quite simply, it is because everything was created by God and therefore reflects the nature of the Creator. Basically, the creation resembles the Creator, just as a painting reflects the nature of the painter. This is the basis of natural theology—seeing God in nature—and is acknowledged by St. Paul who said,

For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. (Rom. 1:19-20)

The theological implication is enormous. A man alone cannot reflect the image of God; nor can a woman by herself. Only together can they even have the potential to reflect God's nature. The word "potential" is used here because it depends on the nature of the relationship. Indeed, it is precisely the *relationship* between a man and woman that determines whether they can actually reflect God's nature. What sort of relationship enables a man and woman to mirror God's image? Can a "one night stand" reflect God's nature? Is being married enough? How long should they be together? How about a man and woman living together for ten, twenty or even a hundred years? Is time the key element? What exactly is the nature of the relationship that fuses a man and woman together, that they might reflect the image of God? To answer this, we need to know nature of our Creator.

God is eternal, unchanging and unconditional. Therefore, in order for the relationship between a man and woman to reflect the nature of God, the bond that binds them together must have these very qualities. The conjugal relationship between a husband and wife must be eternal, unchanging and unconditional in order for them to stand together in the image of God. Man, in essence, needs woman to be complete; and woman, likewise, needs man. This bond, however, cannot be forced on them from outside. No such external force would be strong enough. The bond binding a man and woman together in the image of God must go beyond the contractual side of marriage. Just being married, though necessary, is not enough. Marriage is the framework around which the relationship between a husband and wife is created. But it is that relationship of love, not the framework of marriage, which ultimately binds them together so they can reflect the nature of God. A man and woman will merge together in the image of God as their conjugal love reaches the qualities of being absolutely eternal, unchanging, and unconditional.

In this regard, researchers David Popenoe and Barbara Dafoe Whitehead from The National Marriage Project are concerned about the widespread practice of cohabitation, now more popular than marriage as a first-time relationship. They attribute the rise in the number of non-marital couples to:

a broad cultural shift from a more religious society where marriage was considered the bedrock of civilization and people were imbued with a strong sense of social conformity and tradition, to a more secular society focused on individual autonomy and self invention.[\[23\]](#)

This weakening of marriage norms is troubling to University of Chicago sociologist Linda Waite and syndicated columnist Maggie Gallagher, who warn in their book *The Case for Marriage*:

Marriage cannot thrive, and may not survive, in a culture that views it as just another lifestyle opinion. At the heart of the unacknowledged war on marriage is the attempt to demote marriage from a unique public commitment supported by law, society, and custom to a private relationship, terminable at will, which is nobody else's business.[\[24\]](#)

It is no arbitrary social convention that law, social custom, norms, family, friends and religious tradition traditionally supported the institution of marriage. This social support

is justifiable, even essential, because it benefits people at the most fundamental level<sup>9</sup> to realize their full potential in the image of God.

Sociologists see another rationale for marital union: it actually promotes satisfying love between the partners:

The marriage contract is in one sense liberating: the security of a contract frees individuals to make long-term exchanges that leave each person better off. But any contract also necessarily constrains the parties involved: They are less free to break the terms of the contract. Marriage is no exception. The marriage contract specifically prohibits sex with those besides the marriage partner. By making this vow, a couple changes the nature of their sexual relationship; they are no longer free to find a new sex partner who is more attractive. In exchange, each has more confidence in the fidelity of his or her partner, less anxiety about sexual performance, fewer fears of sexual abandonment, and less cause of sexual jealousy. The benefits and constraints of marriage are not so much trade-offs, as flip sides of the same coin.<sup>[25]</sup>

Here, the cultural debate of marriage vs. love should be put to rest. It is not *marriage hell-or-high-water* and it is not *just give me love, all I need is love*. It is actually both. The institution of marriage is like scaffolding, it is needed while the conjugal bond of love develops and matures. However, once mature, that marital bond, like the awe-inspiring edifice that stands free from the temporary supports, will be held together by its own internal strength. This was the type of *cleaving* that God wanted Adam and Eve to develop at the very beginning of human history. This type of eternal, unchanging and unconditional love would have allowed them to stand together *in the image of God*. Sadly, this didn't happen. Nevertheless, it was God's ideal at the beginning of human history and, it has never changed.

The point here is that the love of a husband and wife needs to become unbreakable. The real question therefore is, How can a man and woman create an unchanging, unconditional, eternal love?

The Bible verse Rev. Moon quotes most frequently is, Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it. (Luke 17:33) He has taken this as a motto for his life, and rephrased it saying, Live for the sake of others. This is a lifestyle of total unselfishness. Living for others is the very core of all the spheres of love.

Parents seek so passionately the well being of their children that they willingly make whatever sacrifice needed, even giving up their lives. Children, in turn, learn to love and care for their parents at great sacrifice, especially as their parents advance in years. Old age is like a second infancy. It is the time when the children can give unconditionally to their parents, just as their parents had done to them when they were infants. Jesus spoke of this type of love among friends, saying, Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. (John 15:13)

Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of modern India, knew the sacrificial nature of true love. Inscribed in stone on his *samadhi* in New Delhi, at the eastern gate overlooking the Jumana River, is Gandhi's prescription for a better world:

I would like to see India free and strong so that she may offer herself as a willing and pure sacrifice for the betterment of the world. The individual, being pure, sacrifices himself for the family. The latter for the village, the village for the district, the district for the province, the province for the nation, the nation for all. I want *Khudai Raj*, which is the same thing as the kingdom of God on earth. The establishment of such a Rajya would not only mean welfare of the whole of the Indian people but of the whole world.

Gandhi identified the relationship between sacrifice, purity, family-building and nation-building. He knew the nature of love, the individual, being pure, sacrifices himself for the family. That's where it begins with sacrifice. The direction of this sacrifice, however, is not for personal gain. It is rather easy to make sacrifices that advance our career, fortune, social status and powerbase. However, Gandhi is not talking about this type of sacrifice. He said, sacrifice for the family, for something greater than the self.

Rev. Moon, who for more than thirty years has been speaking about the power of unselfish love, had a unique insight into the dichotomy between self-benefit and self-sacrifice:

It is the nature of man to be self-centered and to work for himself. This will not change, but it must be redirected. Man has to learn that in order to benefit himself, he must give his whole self to others. This will bring the change in the world order.[\[26\]](#)

In other words, sacrifice is very much a part of genuine love. Yes, love hurts; it is a sacrifice. But the suffering vanishes as dew at dawn by seeing the benefit that sacrifice brings to others. This type of love is in the image of God. In the context of a conjugal relationship, in order to embody that depth of love, a husband and wife must each be willing to live fully for the sake of their spouse.

That's the scary part of marriage; it requires giving up one's self. In this sense, marriage is a death and rebirth experience. But when couples achieve this level of unqualified giving, then together they create a conjugal love that reflects the quality and nature of God's love. In essence, each dies to themselves to be reborn with their spouse in the image of God.

In summary, the biblical injunction to cleave to your wife (or spouse) means that together a husband and wife create an eternal, unchanging and unconditional love between them, not just for the sake of themselves, but so that together they create a new *womb of love* that will nurture and protect the next generation.

### 3) Become One Flesh

Genesis 2:24c is about the proper use of human sexuality. God definitely wanted Adam and Eve to have sex and conceive children. After all, the two should not remain two; no,

He instructed that *they become one flesh*. However, according to this biblical model two vitally important conditions should precede the proper human sexuality.

First, children should be raised in the womb of their parents' love. Not only would they be loved, but they would also learn by experience the proper way to love. That would translate into an undying respect and honor for both their parents. In the case of Adam and Eve, it meant they would respect and honor God as their Parent and be raised in His love. Then, after inheriting the values and norms of their parents' love, the children, now young men and women, would be prepared to create their own God-centered marriage and family. Upon *leaving their father and mother* (Gen. 2:24a), each spouse would be prepared to live for the sake of the other and bequeath these traditions of love to their children.

The second condition before *becoming one flesh* would be that both the man and the woman make a total, public commitment to *cleave* to each other (Gen. 2:24b). Private commitments are easily made, and easily broken. Public commitments, on the other hand, are more difficult to make, and harder to break. A commitment of total unselfishness is needed to make a marriage successful. Therefore, the marriage commitment should be as public as possible, including legal obligations. Both sets of parents, brothers and sisters from both families, cousins, aunts, uncles, as well as friends of the bride and groom should attend the wedding. Thus, religions the world over and from time immemorial have had traditions that invoke the blessings of heaven and good fortune on the bride and groom.

The commitment of the newly weds is imperative. Although this is no guarantee, it is nevertheless much better that both the husband-to-be and wife-to-be make this pledge of total commitment up front. Making marriage as public as possible, tests the unselfishness of the commitment of both parties in advance. Going into marriage with false or selfish expectations will cause difficulties and may destroy the relationship. After all, no one likes changing the rules in the middle of the game.

An examination of the traditional wedding vows, demonstrates the totality and unconditionality of the commitment each person had to make at the outset of their life together.

Do you take this woman [man] whose right hand you now hold to be your lawfully wedded wife [husband]; to love her [him], to cherish her [him], in sickness or in health, in prosperity or adversity, for better or for worse; do you promise to be true to her [him], forsaking all others and cleave unto her [him] and her [him] only, until death do you part?

Such a commitment made in public will strengthen a marriage union, and so it should. But in another sense, the wedding vows are not just for the couple themselves, nor for the family and friends present. They are, in a very real way, for those who are not even there: the couple's future children. This adds a new dimension to conjugal love.

The commitment of marriage includes the emotional, spiritual, financial and legal responsibilities of raising and caring for children born from that relationship. In fact, one of the best ways to love your child is to love your spouse. In researching the sensitive

issues of divorce, marriage, and the impact on children, Judith Wallerstein, America's leading divorce specialist, notes:

The first thing we need to acknowledge is the close link between the marital bond and the parent-child relationship. When the marriage is working and the couple is content, the parent-child relationship is nourished and rewarded by the parents' love and appreciation for each other and supported by their cooperation.[\[27\]](#)

As mentioned earlier, the first eight words of Genesis 1:27 support our most fundamental civil rights. The second part of this verse speaks for the rights of the unborn: only when a man and woman are united in love, can they reflect God's image. Through this level of oneness of heart, God becomes a vibrant part of that relationship. Furthermore, this secures our ultimate human right: *the right to be conceived in and born into a family where God's love abides*. Having parents who are married and committed to each other more likely secures the newborn's most basic entitlement.

If we were asked to design a system for making sure that children's basic needs were met, we would probably come up with something quite similar to the two-parent ideal. Such a design, in theory, not only ensures that children have access to the time and money of two adults; it also provides a system of checks and balances that promotes quality parenting. With both parents having a biological connection to the child, there is greater likelihood that they will identify with the child and be willing to sacrifice for it; further, it reduces the likelihood that either parent would abuse the child.[\[28\]](#)

In review, the bedding for human sexuality was to be a tradition of love inherited from our original parents and passed on through an absolute commitment of marriage between a husband and wife. In this environment, when *they become one flesh* children are not only conceived, but the legacy of love is bequeathed to the next generation.

### **Additional Insights**

In 2001 Rev. Moon conducted a national speaking tour throughout America, speaking in all 50 states in 50 days! In an effort to educate primarily religious leaders, he stressed the importance of ancestry, lineage, and family-connectedness. These concepts are very natural in the oriental way of thinking, but less familiar to the western mind. In this spirit, one recurring topic in Rev. Moon's speech was the theme of love, life and lineage. To make his point, asked repeatedly:

Among these [love, life and lineage], which do you think has most value? Many people think that it is love. However, no matter how valuable love and life are, they are horizontal in nature. They appear and conclude within one generation. On the other hand, lineage is vertical in nature and continues forever, generation after generation.[\[29\]](#)

This exegesis of Genesis 2:24 elucidates the notions of love, life and lineage even providing the correct priority with lineage being first. To leave your father and

mother (Gen 2:24a) is about the birthing of a new family, the continuity of *lineage*. Second, cleaving to your wife (spouse) (Gen. 2:24b) is concerned with the relationship between a husband and wife, i.e., creating true conjugal *love*. Finally, they shall become one flesh (Gen. 2:24c) is about the conception of new *life*.

Genesis 2:24 highlights other fundamental principles. For example, it explains the timelessness of love. *Love of the past*, through honoring your heritage and ancestral lineage by loving your parents. *Love for the present*, through a husband-and-wife love that bonds two people together into the fullness of God's image. Then finally, *love of the future*, through the conception of new life to whom the tradition of love will be bequeathed.

When comparing the above standard of love to the popular view of human sexuality, which frequently focuses on personal pleasure, the difference becomes even more pronounced. In the *Playboy* philosophy, Hugh Hefner says, "If we recognize [sex] as not necessarily limited to procreation, then we should also acknowledge openly that it is not necessarily limited to love either." [30] This notion of human sexuality appears to disregard the children, the partner, and even love itself.

In public schools in the United States, this brand of sex education translates into a form of sexual self-protection. Human sexuality is deemed okay if it is disease free, infertile and consensual. People are more concerned about catching a disease than infecting someone. They are more concerned about the personal consequences of becoming pregnant (or getting someone pregnant) than the life of the child. And they are more worried about being accused by their partner, than his or her heartbreak. The moral values of this type of relationship are truly self-centered.

Ironically, the character of true love based on Gen. 2:24 is just the opposite; it's all about others—your parents, your partner and your children. Sexuality is for the sake of my parents and the continuity of the family lineage. Sexuality is for the sake of my spouse so that, together, we build a bond of love that reflects the image of God. And sexuality is for the sake of our children. Personal pleasure is not mentioned at all, but that does not mean it is not part of the equation. Sex was meant to be pleasurable. The key is to forget about yourself, to be more concerned about your partner than yourself.

Love and a concern for one's partner shifts the focus away from the self in a sexual relationship and toward the other person. This selfless approach to sex, paradoxically, is far more likely to bring sexual satisfaction to both men and women.[31]

This denial-of-self model in the long run ends up being the most fulfilling, because living for others is the basis on which love itself is created.

### **Blueprint for Social Development**

The importance of marriage goes far beyond the institution of marriage itself. Some see a successful family as the paradigm of successful leadership in the corporate world. In *Parenting Your Company to Profits*, John Brandt, former editor-in-chief of *Industry Week* and currently CEO of the Manufacturing Performance Institute, observes, "There are a lot of complicated theories about how to lead and manage. Yet what if it's really no

different than good parenting? [32] Brandt noted four similarities between good parents and effective CEOs:

1) Establishing boundaries:

Good parents set boundaries delineating clearly what is right and wrong. Children respond to what is expected of them, knowing their limitations.

Wise leaders set goals and appropriate guidelines for achieving them. This drives performance, innovation and success.

2) Coaching with praise and positive correction:

Good parents provide constant feedback, criticizing the behavior (when needed) but constantly loving the child. A childhood of belittlement and ridicule is fertile ground for unsuccessful adulthood; a model likely replicated in the next generation.

Wise leaders coach for success. They provide positive feedback that increases both the individual's and the team's chances for winning. On the other hand relentless carping establishes a fear-based leadership where employees lack innovation, are unhappy and unproductive.

3) Allowing for Growth

Good parents allow room for their children to grow, knowing they will become more independent and begin questioning their parent's decisions. Mistakes are seen as teaching moments for the parent and learning opportunities for the child.

Wise leaders view the workforce in similar manner. Employees will need time and training to be empowered. And similar to a parent, the goal of a good leader is to one day become unneeded in day-to-day operations, but always there just in case.

4) Pushing for Success

Good parents judiciously encourage their children to try new things, even if a child lacks confidence. Taking calculated risks will give the child the opportunity to fulfill their individual greatness.

Wise leaders nudge employees out of their comfort zones realizing an employee's confidence and new-found ability will outweigh temporary discomforts and losses of productivity.

Successful marriages and stable, loving families, in addition to developing good leadership skills, embody moral values which become the social norms essential for economic development. Daniel Yankelovich explains:

The success of a market-based economy depends on a highly developed social morality<sup>¶</sup> trustworthiness, honesty, concern for future generations, an ethic of service to others, a humane society that takes care of those in need, frugality instead of greed, high standards of quality, and concern for community. These economically desirable social values, in turn, are seen as rooted in family values.<sup>[33]</sup>

## Conclusion

God surely knew the value of the family as society's most fundamental institution. He also knew that the center of a successful family was a loving couple. If Adam and Eve had heeded God's warning (Gen. 2:17), then the fall of man would have never occurred. Moreover, if they had actually obeyed His instructions regarding the essential components of family building (Gen. 2:24), there would have been no need to expel them from the Garden of Eden. IIFWP Chairman, Rev. Chung Hwan Kwak, put it rather succinctly, "Without the restoration of marriage and family in accordance with God's original ideal, we cannot achieve peace. Without restoring marriage and the family, we will work in vain for peace." <sup>[34]</sup> God's strategic plan for creating an ideal world was to build ideal families. It has not changed.

## Notes

[1] Glenn T. Stanton, *Why Marriage Matters: Reasons to Believe in Marriage in Postmodern Society* (Colorado Springs: Pinon Press, 1997), p. 173.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 100

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 70.

[4] Maggie Gallagher, "The Moral and Social Significance of Marriage in the Global Context," paper presented at the Interreligious and International Federation for World Peace, Assembly 2000. Retrieved Dec. 23, 2002, from <http://www.iifwp.org/Activities/2000/UN/Proceedings/Gallagher.shtml>.

[5] Stanton, *Why Marriage Matters: Reasons to Believe*, p. 30.

[6] William J. Doherty, William A. Galston, Norval D. Glenn, John Gottman, Barbara Markey, Howard J. Markman, et al. *Why Marriage Matters: Twenty-One Conclusions from the Social Sciences* (New York: Institute for American Values, 2002). William J. Doherty is a professor of family social science and the director of the marriage and family therapy program at the University of Minnesota; William A. Galston is a professor at the School of Public Affairs at the University of Maryland, and the director of the university's Institute for Philosophy and Public Policy; Norval D. Glenn is a professor of sociology and American studies at the University of Texas in Austin; John Gottman is a professor of psychology at the University of Washington and the co-founder of the Gottman Institute; Barbara Markey is the associate director of the Center for Marriage and Family at Creighton University, and the director of the Catholic Archdiocese of Omaha's Family Life Office; Howard J. Markman is a professor of psychology at the University of Denver and the co-director of the Center for Marital and Family Studies at the University of Denver; Steven Nock is a professor of sociology at the University of Virginia; David Popenoe is a professor of sociology and the co-director of The National Marriage Project at Rutgers University; Gloria G. Rodriguez is the founder and

president of AVANCE, Inc., in San Antonio, Texas; Isabel V. Sawhill is a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C., and the president of the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy; Scott M. Stanley is the co-director of the Center for Marital and Family Studies at the University of Denver; Linda J. Waite is a professor of sociology at the University of Chicago; and Judith Wallerstein is a child psychoanalyst and a marriage and divorce researcher in Belvedere, California.

- [7] Doherty, *Why Marriage Matters: Twenty-One Conclusions*, p. 6.
- [8] Stanton, *Why Marriage Matters: Reasons to Believe*, p. 163.
- [9] Denis Howe, *The Free On-line Dictionary of Computing* (2001). Retrieved Nov. 29, 2004, from <http://foldoc.doc.ic.ac.uk/foldoc/index.html>.
- [10] Robert Rector, "The Effectiveness of Abstinence Education Programs in Reducing Sexual Activity Among Youth," (Washington DC: The Heritage Foundation, April 8, 2002), p. 4. Retrieved Oct. 28, 2004 from <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Family/loader.cfm?url=/commonspot/security/getfile.cfm&PageID=6203>,
- [11] Stanton, *Why Marriage Matters: Reasons to Believe*, p. 173.
- [12] *Exposition of the Divine Principle* (New York: Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, 1996), pp. 53-78.
- [13] See Patrick F. Fagan, "How to Reconstruct Education and Family: A Proposal from the US," presented at the Pure Love Alliance-Japan sponsored, International Education Symposium, Tokyo, April 24, 1999, p. 8. And Patrick F. Fagan, "The Child Abuse Crisis: The Disintegration of Marriage, Family and The American Community," The Heritage Foundation Backgrounder No. 1115 (Washington DC:, June 3, 1997), pp. 9-10.
- [14] Stanton, *Why Marriage Matters: Reasons to Believe*, p. 113.
- [15] Comment: Teens from Two-Parent Families Are Significantly Less Likely to be Sexually Active, *The Medical Institute for Sexual Health*, November 6, 2000, p. 1.
- [16] Linda Waite and Maggie Gallagher, *The Case for Marriage: Why Married People are Happier, Healthier, and Better Off Financially* (New York: Doubleday, 2000).
- [17] Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, "The Importance of Fathers in the Lives of Girls," *American Educator* 18/4 (1994): 22-29.
- [18] Ibid.
- [19] Ibid.
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- [21] Terry D. Hargrave, "The Essential Humility of Marriage," Keynote Presented at the Fourth Annual Smart Marriages Conference, Denver, 2000, Retrieved April 26, 2003 from <http://www.smartmarriages.com/hargrave.html>.
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- [25] Ibid., pp. 23-24.

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- [28] Sara McLanahan and Gary Sandefur, *Growing Up with a Single Parent: What Hurts, What Helps* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), p. 38.
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- [33] Stanton, *Why Marriage Matters: Reasons to Believe*, p. 119.
- [34] Chung Hwan Kwak, The Providential Role of IIFWP, *Today's World*, 25/9 (Nov.-Dec. 2004): 24.