

The Foundation for a Healthy Family

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[0 : 00] I want you, or some people in this room, to help me introduce this message. If you and your spouse have been married for at least 40 years, I want you to stand.

You and your spouse, you've been married for 40 years at least, stand, okay? Now, if you've been married for at least 50 years, remain standing.

Okay? If you've been married for at least 60 years, remain standing. All right.

I don't have this in my notes now. If you've been married at least 65 years, remain standing. Okay. Okay. Those 60, if you've been married 60 years, stand back up. Let's give them applause. What I'm doing here, I want you to see, we have many couples who at least appear to understand something about God's design for marriage.

[1 : 24] Now, I say they appear to understand they've stayed together this many years. We don't know what it's like. Okay.

But they are demonstrating for sure the permanent nature of marriage that Jesus described. Look at this verse. He's talking about God's design for marriage in Genesis 2.24.

And he says, That's the goal. I'm beginning a four-part series this morning called Building a Healthy Family.

Today, we're going to look at God's design or God's original foundation for a healthy family in Genesis 2, verses 24 and 25.

We're going to be looking at the foundation for a healthy family. We're focused on the husband-wife relationship today.

[2 : 31] Lord willing, we'll look at parent-child relationship. No, next week we're looking at the foundation for marriage today. About two people coming together. Next week we're going to look at more details about the husband-wife relationship.

Third week, the parent-child relationship. Now, what we're looking at today in Genesis chapter 2, specifically verse 24, but we're adding to it verse 25 today.

This is God's blueprint. We have looked at this before. It's been taught, preached by other people in this church.

But nowhere else in the world outside of a church, a Christian teaching session setting, nowhere else in the world are you going to hear what we're going to look at today.

God's design, His intent for how husbands and wives, men and women, come together and form their marriage. Virtually all research, secular and Christian, supports the idea that a healthy marriage provides the most solid foundation for a healthy home.

[3 : 48] I want you to look at something that comes from Focus on the Families. It was Citizens Link. It's now called Family Policy Alliance. Marriage is good for people, for women, for men, and for children.

Research for the last 30 years continues to find ways in which lifelong marriage positively affects our physical and emotional health, and even our finances.

And at the end of that article, it says this, a thriving society and culture depend on stable marriages.

I don't know that you would call our current society and culture thriving. I don't see how we could.

And one of the main reasons why it's not is because we as a country have sort of forgotten what we're going to look at today, God's design, God's intent for the home, the foundation for the home.

Look with me. Genesis 2, 24 and 25. It'll be on the screen, but keep your Bibles open. Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

[5 : 10] And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. Now, I've said several times by design, this is God's blueprint for marriage.

This is the foundation. We're going to look at pillars that form a strong marriage. Some people, maybe some in this room, you're thinking, I think he's sort of overstating this, overstating the significance.

Well, consider this. When Jesus taught about marriage in the context of being questioned about divorce, when Jesus taught about the foundational nature of marriage, he quoted Genesis 2, 24. It's in Matthew 19. When Paul gave detailed instructions about the home and about marriage, about husband-wife relationships, in Ephesians 5, he quoted Genesis 2, 24.

It's not an overstatement for us to look at Genesis 2, 24 and 25 as the bedrock, it's the foundation if you're interested in having a healthy marriage, family, home.

[6 : 31] I want us to look at this passage using four words that Chuck Swindoll coined to explain this passage. I often use this in wedding ceremonies.

And some of you here, we use this in your wedding ceremony. Here they are. The words severance, permanence, unity, and intimacy. We're going to look at each one individually. Here's what I want us to understand. If we want to have healthy homes, we need to make sure that our marriage is based on these four foundational principles.

Let's look at them. The principle of severance. The first step in the process of building a healthy home is this. A man shall leave his father and his mother. The same thing is true about a woman. A woman must leave her father and mother first before the healthy home can be established. Now, let's think about it for a moment.

[7 : 32] What does it mean to leave your father and mother? Does it mean to just say so long, forget it? You know, it was nice knowing you? Obviously not. When he says to leave your father and mother, it does not mean to abandon them.

It doesn't mean to cut them off from your life. It does not mean that we would do anything that could be considered disrespectful.

The fifth commandment states, honor your father and mother, and it applies to adult children as well as small children. All of us in here, if our parents are still alive, we're supposed to honor them.

And leaving father or mother does not give us a license to dishonor them. What does it mean? Well, again, I want to quote Swindoll.

He has a good definition, I think, or explanation of what it means to leave your father and mother. He says it means to sever tight, emotionally dependent strings that once provided security, protection, financial, and physical needs.

[8 : 43] All or any of those ties, if brought over into a marriage, will hinder the bond of marriage from sealing. So God mentions this first, even before he talks about uniting or cleaving to each other.

When we get married, when you got married, your relational priorities should have changed. For those of you who are not married yet, you're thinking one day you will.

When you get married, your relational priorities should change. The number one person in your life, if you're married, should be your spouse.

Now, it takes time for that to happen. And in normal courtships, in normal engagement periods, that should be taking place.

If you're engaged. If you're engaged, you're engaged. The process, the process of leaving father and mother should already be underway.

[10 : 02] And if you've been dating for five years, you've been engaged for eight months, and you don't see any signs, that's a red flag. If he's still mama's boy, or she's still daddy's girl, and it looks like, where do I fit in?

Red flag. By the time you get married, by the time we got married, we should have made the definite commitment that my wife, my husband, is the number one person in my life under Christ. Now, how this change takes place depends on the couple and their parents. It's according to the kind of relationship you had before you get married, as to how this actually works itself out. But for some people, the best way for this to take place is to move away. For some people, move far, far away.

Lisa and I got married, and we lived one year, about 15 minutes from her family, and about 45 minutes from my family. After one year, we moved.

[11 : 20] She was from Belton, I was from Pendleton. After one year, we moved to Fort Worth, Texas, for me to go to seminary, and we lived out there for three years. And it was one of the best

things that we could ever have done for our relationship.

And I want you to understand, we didn't have any problems when we lived close by that first year. We, I never thought Lisa didn't leave father and mother to be united to me.

She never thought that I didn't leave father and mother and be united to her. But moving away like we did, where we didn't know anyone, we were not kin to anyone, living a thousand miles away from family for three years, it made us draw close together.

It made us spend a lot more time together. We learned to depend on one another in a way I don't think we ever could have, or maybe not would have, if we'd always lived close by to our parents. So I highly recommend it. If it's on the verge of happening, couple, embrace it. It's an adventure. Dad, mom, if it's your child is about to go, it is sad.

[12 : 41] It can be gut-wrenching. But give them your blessing. It is, under most circumstances, it is going to be a good thing for their relationship, for their marriage.

Now, everybody doesn't have to move away. I know that, and I'm not saying that you have to. Everyone does not have to move away, but everyone has to break away from being dependent upon, having those tight, emotional, and other strings attached to their parents.

The break has got to be made if you're going to have a close, bonding kind of marriage in every way that we read about here in Genesis 2.24.

You cannot have the solid foundation for a healthy marriage and be tied to mama or daddy, either one of you. I want to repeat that.

You cannot be the spouse that you ought to be to your husband. You cannot provide the model you ought to provide to your children if your mother is the first woman in your life, man.

[13 : 55] If your dad is the first man in your life, woman. That's not how God designed it to be. And there are no exceptions.

Now, there's a word in here for parents. Let your adult married child go. Let your adult married child go.

Allow them to leave you and grow close to their mate. That is God's will. That is God's design. If you want to be on board with God's design, God's plan for your children's home, you might need to cut the strings.

You might need to tell them, talk to your spouse about that. You and him or you and her, you make the decision. You talk about it.

It doesn't involve me. It's not my decision to make. It is yours. Both of our sons are married. Most of you know that.

[15 : 07] Know my whole family. We love our daughters-in-law. We have been blessed by two daughters-in-law and two grandchildren.

We have a great relationship with our daughters-in-law. We do a lot of things together. They put up with me aggravating them all the time.

But I want to tell you this, and you can ask both boys and daughters-in-law to verify. We don't try to run their life. We do not try in any way to run their lives.

Believe it or not, I do not give my boys a whole lot of unsolicited advice. I don't tell them everything I think about what they're doing. Now, I'll be honest with you.

If it's just something stupid, I'm going to tell them that's stupid. I couldn't sit by and let them do something I thought was just dumb. This is just crazy. And not tell them.

[16 : 12] But if they choose to do it, it's their decision. And they will live with it. Not me. My boys, my daughters-in-law, these two families, they live their lives.

They live the lives that they choose. We don't try to tell them what to do. Now, I want to give here sort of what you might call a free piece of advice to parents of grown children.

None of your children have told me this, but some of them wish they would like to. Don't go to their house uninvited. Mama-in-law and papa-in-law.

Mama and daddy have grown men and women. Don't show up at the doorstep uninvited. Don't make surprise visits.

They may not tell you that because they want to spare your feelings, but they don't like it. You're intruding. You're actually crossing the line.

[17 : 36] Always call. Always see if it's okay. If you're not going to be interfering. Respect their privacy.

Now, for you who needed me to say that, \$20 would be sufficient on your way out. Parents and adult children, and I want to clarify something here.

Parents and adult children can have a great relationship. Parents and adult children can have a close relationship and enjoy life together and do a lot of things together.

And that's the goal. But it should never be a question as to who is first in a married man and married woman's life.

Lisa and I are first in each other's life under God. And her parents know that. They're alive right now. They know that. They've always known that. My parents knew that.

[18 : 41] They always knew that. My boys, they can tell you, Lisa and I are first in each other's lives.

Those of you who know us, you know it. You see it. Here's what we want for our boys. We want Amy to be number one in David's life.

We want Jennifer to be number one in Michael's life. That's God's plan.

That's the way he made marriage. That is his will. And that's what my grandchildren, their children need to see. And the same thing applies to you and your family.

That's the principle of severance. Let's move. The principle of permanence. The next phrase, hold fast to his wife or be united to his wife.

[19 : 39] Either way, translated both ways. This refers, this idea of holding fast, being united. The old King James, cleave.

It refers to the strongest of possible unions, like being glued together or welded together. In order for a marriage to survive and thrive, both husband and wife must make the commitment to each other.

This is permanent. This is not a trial marriage. This is not we hope it works out. This is for life. And separation or divorce should never be an option.

Divorce was not a part of God's original plan, as Jesus reveals. Look at it. This is Matthew 19, where he's being sort of sucked into a discussion.

People arguing over grounds for divorce and so forth. Jesus replied, Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning.

[20 : 43] It was not God's design. Anytime a marriage breaks up, it is a violation of God's intent for that marriage. So divorce happens because of sin.

But listen to this. While all divorces involve sin, not everyone involved in the divorce is guilty of sin. There are biblical grounds for divorce and remarriage. That's not our point this morning. We've talked about that in days gone by. We're focusing on marriage this morning.

And just as an aside, just for the case of maybe the few who are here who think this way, a person who's been divorced for whatever reason can be forgiven. If we truly repent of any sin and seek forgiveness by trusting in Christ, then our sins are forgiven.

There's been a day in church life and in Baptist life in particular maybe, when divorce was considered the unpardonable sin, and that's always been wrong, and it's wrong today.

[21 : 49] There's nothing that irritates me more than somebody who's never been divorced, who has a smug, look-down-their-nose attitude, as somebody who has been divorced. So I want to throw that part out.

Because there's been too many people wounded by churches with arrogant attitudes just because they've stayed married, or people who just stayed married.

I've told you this before, and I said what I said about people being married a long time. It appears they're doing something right. It appears they're following God's design. Everybody who stays married didn't want to stay married.

Many years ago, I had a lady that I knew, her husband of 50 or 60 years, I can't remember, it was a long time, 50 or 60 years, he died. And I asked her, or I said something to her, I know you miss John.

She said, I don't miss him, I'm glad he's dead. And I'm serious. Those were her exact words. I don't miss him, I'm glad he's dead. They had a terrible relationship.

[22 : 59] He was meaner than a snake. She was glad he died. So everybody that sticks together, it's not a wonderful, it's not a God-honoring marriage. And sometimes there are grounds for divorce.

So, God intends for us to think of marriage as a lifetime commitment. Permanent. And you need to let that sink in if you're married right now.

You need to think right now. If you're a Christian, your spouse is a Christian, you both want to make your marriage work, you can. Changes may need to take place, but you can.

That's God's plan. He'll help you. Number three, the principle of unity. I want you to look at this next phrase. Talking about them becoming one flesh, they shall become one flesh.

This refers to more than the sexual relationship. It includes that, but also the emotional and spiritual aspects of oneness are included. Now, obviously, this is not something that happens overnight.

[24 : 08] It's a process. You have to grow together, work at growing together in oneness. But this one flesh relationship, it is the foundation for a healthy marriage.

And it also explains why God created marriage in the first place. I want you to look at Genesis 2.18. We'll put it on the screen. It says, Then the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone.

I will make him a helper fit for him. The only thing prior to the fall that God said wasn't good, and it was that the man was alone. God created most people, the overwhelming majority of people, to not be complete alone, to desire a spouse.

And by the way, this is not the message this morning, but under God's design, there's only one definition of marriage. It's between a man and a woman only, exclusively.

Regardless of what the Supreme Court of the United States says, regardless of what becomes law today, before God, according to the truth of His Word, marriage is intended for one man and one woman only.

[25 : 27] And the purpose is companionship. The reason, the first reason given for why God created marriage here in 2.18, companionship.

The first great purpose of your marriage, just think about your marriage, is to provide companionship. God intends for husbands and wives to share life together in a one flesh, emotionally, physically, relationship.

A simple way to say this is, God intends for you and your spouse to be best friends. Not only friends now. Every man in here, you need some more, you need male friends.

Every woman in here, you need female friends. For sure. And we can have friends of the opposite sex, but we can't have our best friend of the opposite sex. It's not healthy. Unless it's your spouse.

And that's the goal for your spouse to be your best friend. Now here's what I want to ask you. In your relationship with your spouse, are you a real companion?

[26 : 39] Does your spouse feel like you are a real companion? Or does your spouse feel like he or she is living like a single person because of the way that you treat them?

You know, in some marriages, the husband and wife is more like a roommate than a husband and wife. In some marriages, a husband and wife share the same living space.

But that's about all they share. They go their separate ways day in and day out. They have their own separate friends. They have their own separate interests.

And they just basically live as single people. They're like buddies with benefits. There's no real one flesh relationship present or growing.

If that's where your marriage is now, you need to act now and do something about it to correct it.

And the place to begin is to talk to God about it and talk to your spouse about it. You may not think it's a problem.

[27 : 45] Ask your spouse. Especially if you have a lot of or one particular single guy friend or another married guy who lives like a single guy. And you just do so much with that person.

Most of your time is spent outside of work with that person. Doing those fun things you like to do with that person. You might need to sort of stand back and look at how I live my life.

Who I'm really investing in. Where my time is going. Where does your spouse fit as you think about that?

If you want to change something, it may be you've got to prioritize the people and things in your life so that your spouse will be at the top of the list right under your relationship with God.

You should not let anyone or anything take your spouse's rightful place as being number one on earth to you.

Developing this one flesh relationship as I said it's not going to happen tonight. It's not going to happen this week. It's a process. It's going to take time.

[29 : 00] It's going to take patience. It's going to take forgiveness from time to time. It's going to take wisdom. It's going to take love. Self-giving love on the part of both husband and wife.

Let's look at the next one. Final one. Number four. The principle of intimacy. And the man and his wife were both naked and they were not ashamed. I want you to notice that the principle of intimacy is found last in this passage.

The idea is that the delights of intimacy. We're talking about the sexual relationship right here. The delights of intimacy between a husband and wife are enjoyed because severance, permanence, and unity are in operation.

This little phrase tells us two things. First of all, premarital sex is wrong. I don't care what everybody else is doing. I don't care what the culture just expects nowadays.

The sexual relationship is so special. God created sex, the sex drive. It is a gift from him, but it's so special he designed it to be enjoyed between a husband and wife only in the context of a marriage.

[30 : 14] It is special. It is important. And you need to wait if you're a single person until you give yourself, until you leave your parents, united to that spouse, and you're growing in that one flesh relationship in every way.

Second thing this little phrase tells us is that extramarital sex is wrong. First thing that comes into mind, adultery, it is wrong. The intimacy between a husband and wife is so special and sacred that this intimacy must never be violated.

Adultery is wrong, it's sinful, in every shape, form, or fashion. There are no excuses. But intimacy between a husband and wife cannot be, can also be destroyed in other ways.

In this day especially, pornography destroys a lot of intimacy between husbands and wives.

men. It's causing a lot of problems in the minds and hearts of men. It's doing a lot of damage in our culture, in our homes, in these kinds of, in our husband-wife relationships.

[31 : 33] It's not good and it's not healthy to be always flirting around with someone of the opposite sex. It is wrong, Jesus said, to look at a person and lust.

You're committing adultery in your heart. Emotional affairs are sinful mental endeavors. I want to encourage you, guard your mind, guard your heart.

Don't let anyone or anything into your mind, into your body that would interfere in the relationship, the special, intimate relationship that God wants you to enjoy but exclusively experience with your spouse.

I want you to understand this morning that what we're looking at is God's idea. marriage is God's idea and He designed it to work in a certain way. And if we will patiently, faithfully, follow God's design, we'll have marriages, we'll have homes that are healthy and for the most part, happy.

You know, God is still in the business of building marriages or if necessary, rebuilding them. It may be that as we've gone through this passage this morning, you see some cracks in the pillars, these four pillars of your marriage.

[33 : 06] And maybe just one of them or two of them. I want to encourage you to acknowledge that. Talk to God about it. Talk to your spouse about it.

Ask them if they see the same thing. develop a plan of action together to work on the severance, to work on the intimacy, to work on the oneness, the unity.

Make sure that Jesus Christ is your Lord. Make sure that His Spirit indwells you because you need His help to make this work.

and make sure Christ is the Lord of your home. Make sure that you're desirable than anything else is to develop your marriage according to the way we've looked at this morning.

No matter what anyone else tells you or whatever or anything else you read or see or hear. All of us understand the importance of having a strong, stable foundation for everything that we build.

[34 : 13] If you've built a house, you know a great effort was put into laying a good solid foundation. The house that you live in now, if it's got crawl space, you can crawl under there and you can see the foundation that's been put in place.

If you live on a slab, you can see the slab that's been poured. We all know and understand the importance of having, building our lives, our homes, our houses on a solid foundation.

foundation. Well, I want you to know that even more importantly, your marriage, your home, your family, it needs to be built on a solid foundation.

And the place to begin are with these four pillars, these four supports that we looked at this morning. Severance, permanence, unity, and intimacy.

Are these pillars securely in place in your marriage? If they're not, work on it with God's help starting today.

[35 : 22] Let's pray together. Father, help us to see how we need to respond as husbands and wives to this message. Help us to see clearly this is your design and it's the only design.

Father, show us how things really are. Help us to talk to our spouse and make sure that we both understand and are on the same page about each one of these.

Lord, so work in us that we have this strong foundation for our marriage, our home, our family. Help us to be the right kind of models for those who are looking at us. Show us how we should respond.

Help us to do it, not just now, but to carry out the commitment this afternoon, this evening, this week.

[36 : 42] And then in attitude of prayer, let's just do that. I'd be happy to pray with you during this time. I'll be here at the front. But you listen to God and you make the kind of commitment that needs to be made to have a strong foundation for your marriage.

we'll be here atha. Good night. Amen.