

\* These notes are provided for personal devotional and study purposes only. They may not be published, distributed, or disseminated to others without the permission of the author.

## **Sex and the Covenant Family**

### **Series: Divine Design: Sex According to the Bible**

**The Village Church at Shell Point**

**Evening Service**

**March 23, 2025**

#### I. **Purpose of the series**

- A. I have two concerns in this series
  - 1. Take the time to review the biblical views of sexuality, especially as it relates to marriage
    - a. (For biblically, sexuality and marriage are inseparable)
    - b. So we can confirm our biblical roots and commitments
    - c. And now be swayed by the changing winds of cultural waves
  - 2. And then also to evaluate the more extreme forms of sexual expression from those biblical standards
    - a. And help us know how to engage with our children and grandchildren as they face the onslaught of the enemy of our souls

#### II. **The Genesis Connection**

- A. Everything we needed to know about sex we learned in Genesis
  - 1. God's design for marriage and sexuality is established in Genesis
  - 2. Nearly every aberration from God's design and their consequences are illustrated in Genesis

#### III. **First Message**

##### A. **Divine Design**

- 1. Male-female dichotomy established
- 2. Male and females made in God's image
- 3. Jesus affirmed the male-female prerequisite for marriage and sexual expression
  - a. Quotes Genesis 1 and 2 approvingly
- 4. Male-female coupling for sexuality has procreative purpose
  - a. Rooted in the dominion mandate – multiply, fill the earth and subdue it
  - b. True even if not every male-female couple can have children
  - c. And true even if not every male and female marries and remains single

##### B. **Divine Complementarity**

- 1. Not good that the man should be alone
- 2. Woman created from man's sela (Heb) or side (aka, rib)
- 3. Woman as the "better half"!
- 4. Reaction of the man: "At last!"

- a. Woman is far and above any possible animal companion
  - 5. **Genesis 2:24** (ESV) —
    - a. 24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.
  - 6. Man-wife as new familial unit
    - a. The prioritized family unit
    - b. Jesus affirmed
  - 7. **Helper fit for him**
    - a. Balance of woman as helper, but corresponding to him
    - b. Helper, but equal in personhood
    - c. Both image-bearers of God
  - 8. All before the fall
- C. **Arranged Marriage**
  - 1. **Adam and Eve**
    - a. Matchmaker was God
    - b. Humans were without sin
    - c. Yet the humans could, and would, change
      - (1) And would still fall into sin
  - 2. **Isaac and Rebekah**
    - a. Abraham's servant went to relatives
      - (1) God's providence relied on to make the identification (not by chance)
    - b. Once identified, servant deals with Rebekah's parents
    - c. Rebekah was given some say in terms of timing
      - (1) But she goes with the servant to marry a man she had never laid eyes on
    - d. Isaac has even less input
      - (1) Servant shows up with Rebekah, and that's it
    - e. Successful marriage!
      - (1) Isaac was comforted after his mother's death
      - (2) He never sought another wife (cf Abraham and Isaac's sons)
      - (3) Didn't try to solve Rebekah's barrenness by use of a concubine
    - f. Providence of God central to the success of this arranged marriage
  - 3. **Jacob**
    - a. Not so successful arranged marriage
    - b. Falls in love with Rachel
      - (1) Serves Laban 7 years to gain her hand
    - c. Deceived into consummating the marriage with Rachel's older sister
    - d. Serves another 7 years for Rachel
    - e. All kinds of problematic consequences
      - (1) What should Jacob had done?
    - f. What if you marry the wrong person?

#### IV. Second Message

- A. Naked and Not Ashamed
- B. The Fall
  - 1. Grace After the Fall
- C. Marriage and the Fall
  
- D. Romance and Marriage
  - 1. Falling in love
  - 2. David's son Amnon fell in love with his half-sister Tamar (2 Samuel 13.1-15)
  - 3. Better example – Isaac and Rebekah
  - 4. Dangers of falling in love
  - 5. Romance preceding marriage
  - 6. Wrong romantic love before or after marriage
  - 7. Fading romance cannot be allowed to neglect the marital commitments
  - 8. Helping one another
  
- E. Social Significance of Marriage
  - 1. Take Esau
  - 2. Joseph
- F. The Love Triangle
  - 1. Abraham and Sarah
  - 2. Jacob, Rachel and Leah

#### V. Marriage of Believer to an Unbeliever

- A. A Curious Text
  - 1. Genesis 6:1-2 (ESV) —
    - a. 1 When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them,
    - b. 2 the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose.
  - 2. Wait. What?
    - a. Sons of God, daughters of man?
    - b. Who were they and what's this all about
  
- B. Options
  - 1. Supernatural beings, maybe even from another world, cohabited with the human women, producing an generation of giants
    - a. Genesis 6:4 (ESV) —
      - (1) 4 The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.
    - b. Today's English Version: Some of the supernatural beings saw that these girls were beautiful, so they took the ones they liked.... In

those days, and even later, there were giants on the earth who were descendants of human women and the supernatural beings.

(1) Really, not a translation but an interpretation

- c. Nephilim – more likely heroes or fierce warriors than giants; was translated in LXX as gigantes (Gk) which was misleading
  - d. Giborim – mighty men is more literal; LXX translates that as gigantes (Gk) also
  - e. There is nothing in scripture to indicate that supernatural beings have ever cohabited with human women
2. Sons of God are angels
    - a. “Sons of God” is used of angels occasionally in scripture (Job, in particular)
    - b. Jesus, in fact, denies that angels are capable of sexual activity and procreation
    - c. Jesus’ response to problem posed by Sadducees re: Levirate marriage – whose wife will the 7 brothers be in heaven: in heaven, they are not married but are like angels in heaven
    - d. “Sons of God” is also used for godly offspring
  3. Sons of God are kings
    - a. Title of dignity
    - b. But not used in scripture in that sense
  4. Sons of God are godly offspring, the seed of the woman that would be in conflict with Satan
    - a. Contrasts with the “daughters of men” – the offspring of unredeemed humanity

C. **Context, context, context**

1. Context of Genesis
  - a. Context of the whole Bible
2. **Genesis 4 – Descendants of Cain**
  - a. Enoch – built a city in honor of Enoch
  - b. Irad
  - c. Mehujael
  - d. Methushael
  - e. Lamech
3. **Lamech** – 2 wives
  - a. Jabal – livestock
  - b. Jubal – musician
  - c. Tubal-cain – metallurgist
4. **Genesis 4:23–24** (ESV) —
  - a. 23 Lamech said to his wives: “Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; you wives of Lamech, listen to what I say: I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me.
  - b. 24 If Cain’s revenge is sevenfold, then Lamech’s is seventy-sevenfold.”

5. Genesis 4 – story of the development of a line which continued and multiplied the violence of Cain
    - a. **Genesis 4:25–26** (ESV) —
      - (1) 25 And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth, for she said, “God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him.”
      - (2) 26 To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time people began to call upon the name of the LORD.
    - b. The beginning of another line of humanity – the offspring of Seth, Able’s replacement
    - c. The beginning of a worshiping people
  6. **Genesis 5 – The godly line of Seth**
    - a. Enosh
    - b. Kenan
    - c. Mahalalel
    - d. Jared
    - e. Enoch
    - f. Methuselah
    - g. Lamech
    - h. Noah
  7. **Genesis 5:24** (ESV) —
    - a. 24 Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.
  8. Two family lines
    - a. Line of Cain – increasingly evil and violent
    - b. Line of Seth – God-worshippers
- D. Genesis 6 – increasing corruption on the earth
1. Sons of God saw the daughters of man – married them
    - a. Natural explanation – sons of God were male members of the godly line of Seth; daughters of men were women offspring of ungodly line of Cain
  2. **Genesis 6:5–8** (ESV) —
    - a. 5 The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.
    - b. 6 And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart.
    - c. 7 So the LORD said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.”
    - d. 8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.
  3. Now both lines were corrupted to the degree that God would judge them all
    - a. Except for Noah and his family who continued to persevere in faithfulness

- E. Overriding principle – if you intermarry with the ungodly, you will be burned
1. The influence of intermarriage of believer to unbeliever will have devastating consequences
    - a. The very collapse of culture
  2. That principle becomes a core value of both the OT and NT
  3. **Exodus 34:15–16** (ESV) —
    - a. 15 lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and when they whore after their gods and sacrifice to their gods and you are invited, you eat of his sacrifice,
    - b. 16 and you take of their daughters for your sons, and their daughters whore after their gods and make your sons whore after their gods.
  4. **Deuteronomy 7:3–4** (ESV) —
    - a. 3 You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons,
    - b. 4 for **they would turn away your sons from following me**, to serve other gods. Then **the anger of the LORD would be kindled** against you, and he would destroy you quickly.
  5. Most of the history of the OT is a record of their failure in just this way
  6. Solomon was the most prominent example
  7. **1 Kings 11:9–11** (ESV) —
    - a. 9 And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice
    - b. 10 and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods. But he did not keep what the LORD commanded.
    - c. 11 Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, “Since this has been your practice and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes that I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and will give it to your servant.
  8. New Testament echoes the same principle
  9. **2 Corinthians 6:14–18** (ESV) —
    - a. 14 Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?
    - b. 15 What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever?
    - c. 16 What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, “I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.
    - d. 17 Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you,

- e. 18 and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty.”
- 10. Great temptation to believers in our age
  - a. O. Palmer Robertson: Men and women who are unbelievers can be kind, loving, considerate, handsome, beautiful, and attractive.... But the people of God must not be deceived.... The person who marries an unbelieving spouse can very easily be pulled to the other person’s level, just as the Israelites who intermarried with idol-worshippers eventually worshipped idols themselves.
  - b. Temptations also for seniors who are attracted by companionship when a spouse is lost – but the same principles apply!
- 11. Redemption for those who have fallen into error
  - a. Story of Morgantown friend who married Jewish unbeliever

## VI. Mismatched Marriage

- A. Issue – married to the wrong person
  - 1. Best example in Genesis – Esau’s marriages (**Genesis 26-28**)
    - a. Esau married two Hittite women when he was 40
    - b. He was the same age as his beloved father Isaac was
  - 2. **Genesis 26:35** (ESV) —
    - a. 35 and they made life bitter for Isaac and Rebekah.
  - 3. **Genesis 27:46** (ESV) —
    - a. 46 Then Rebekah said to Isaac, “I loathe my life because of the Hittite women. If Jacob marries one of the Hittite women like these, one of the women of the land, what good will my life be to me?”
  - 4. That prompts Isaac and Rebekah to send Jacob away to relatives to find a wife
- B. The main issue of this mismatch is not necessarily culture but religious
  - 1. Esau’s Hittite wives did not share the family’s faith
- C. When Jacob is sent away to find a wife, Esau tries to remedy the situation and marries again
  - 1. This time he marries Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael by Hagar the Egyptian
  - 2. That doesn’t help – just multiplies the pain
- D. NT application – marriage to one of different faith
  - 1. Causes
    - a. Poor decision by one believing spouse
    - b. Conversion of one spouse after marriage resulting in religiously divided home
    - c. Deception of one spouse professing faith when it is not true faith
    - d. Broken promises of one spouse to follow the faith
  - 2. **1 Corinthians 7:10–11** (ESV) —
    - a. 10 To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife should not separate from her husband

- b. 11 (but if she does, she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife.
    - 3. This is the teaching that applies to both psychological or physical abuse
      - a. Separation is an option
    - 4. **1 Corinthians 7:12–16** (ESV) —
      - a. 12 To the rest I say (I, not the Lord) that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her.
      - b. 13 If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him.
      - c. 14 For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.
      - d. 15 But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved. God has called you to peace.
      - e. 16 For how do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?
    - 5. If a believing spouse finds himself or herself married to an unbelieving spouse, he or she should not separate if the spouse is willing to continue the marriage
      - a. But if the unbelieving spouse leaves, then the believer is freed from the relationship and is able to remarry
    - 6. Even in this relationship, there is hope for redemption of the unbelieving spouse
      - a. Example of Morgantown friend
- E. Mismatches within common faith households
  - 1. Sometimes those mismatches are based on cultural backgrounds
    - a. Very different circumstances – Jean I grew up in the same small Maryland community, two intact parents, in similar UMC churches, went to the same schools, had overlapping circles of friends
    - b. Compared to a couple who are friends of Matts – young man growing up in suburban Nashville marrying a girl of Indian immigrant parents; both Christian families, but surely many adjustments need to be made
  - 2. Most difficult mismatches occur because of a failure to apply basic of Christian living in the home; how to resolve conflict; how to listen constructively; how to confess sin and forgive
    - a. Christianity alone provides an adequate basis for resolving differences



3. Even in the case of Esau, there was hope for redemption for his descendants
4. **Amos 9:11-12** (ESV) —
  - a. 11 “In that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen and repair its breaches, and raise up its ruins and rebuild it as in the days of old,
  - b. 12 that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by my name,” declares the LORD who does this.
5. Same phrase is applied to Edom as applied to the election of Israel
6. James quotes this very passage to support the inclusion of Gentiles into the fledgling church in Acts 15 in the Jerusalem Council
7. Robertson: Virtually any marriage can work, so long as people are willing to surrender personal preferences for the greater good of a stable relationship.

## VII. **Unrequited Love**

- A. What to do when love is not returned?
  1. Example – Leah
  2. **Genesis 29:31** (ESV) —
    - a. 31 When the LORD saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb, but Rachel was barren.
  3. Caused by father Laban’s deceit
    - a. Jacob fell in love with Rachel; arranged to have Rachel for 7 years labor
    - b. Night of wedding, consummated by Laban substituting Leah
    - c. Culture has the older being married before the younger
  4. Focus has been on Jacob and its effect on him
    - a. Not much is recognized for Leah’s humiliation
    - b. What did she feel when she was rejected by Jacob!
    - c. She very likely had developed affections for Jacob – but they were not returned – just the opposite, in fact
  5. Leah compensated – tried to earn Jacob’s favor by siring children
  6. Lesson – God does see the unloved, and He was behind the compensation (“... the LORD saw that Leah was hated... he opened her womb”)
  7. **Genesis 29:32** (ESV) —
    - a. 32 And Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben, for she said, “Because the LORD has looked upon my affliction; for now my husband will love me.”
  8. While she looked to the Lord for her compensation, she would not be satisfied until she had Jacob’s affection
  9. It wasn’t until her fourth child that she would become resolved (relatively) with the situation
  10. **Genesis 29:35** (ESV) —

- a. 35 And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, “This time I will praise the LORD.” Therefore she called his name Judah. Then she ceased bearing.
- 11. But her pain would continue: the episode of the mandrakes
- 12. Rachel asks Leah to share some of her son Reuben’s mandrakes
  - a. Mandrakes was a fruit thought to be an aphrodisiac, and promotion for child-bearing
  - b. Essentially, the barren but loved Rachel is asking the fertile but unloved Leah for assistance in bearing children
- 13. **Genesis 30:15** (ESV) —
  - a. 15 But she said to her, “Is it a small matter that you have taken away my husband? Would you take away my son’s mandrakes also?” Rachel said, “Then he may lie with you tonight in exchange for your son’s mandrakes.”
- 14. So Rachel makes a deal – provides Jacob for Leah in exchange for the mandrakes
  - a. Likely Jacob had not had relations with Leah for some time!
- 15. Leah has two more sons as a result!
- 16. **Genesis 30:20** (ESV) —
  - a. 20 Then Leah said, “God has endowed me with a good endowment; now my husband will honor me, because I have borne him six sons.” So she called his name Zebulun.
- B. Being unloved is heart-rending
  - 1. Leah was right to look to God for recompense
    - a. And the unloved among us should do the same
  - 2. But she never properly dealt with the pain

### VIII. **Navigating Family Life**

- A. Marriage relationship involves leaving and cleaving
  - 1. Command to honor parents would continue
    - a. But new priority in relationships takes precedence
- B. Example – Jacob with Leah and Rachel
  - 1. Married and lived with Jacob’s family the main period of early relationships – more than 20 years!
    - a. Both wives were Laban’s daughters
    - b. All of the children were Laban’s grandchildren
  - 2. During this time there were household dynamics with the two wives
    - a. Plus the business relationship between Laban and Jacob
    - b. In which Laban took advantage of Jacob, leading to distrust
  - 3. Jacob resolves to depart for his own family and complete the break
    - a. How would that be received by the daughters/wives?
  - 4. **Genesis 31:14–16** (ESV) —
    - a. 14 Then Rachel and Leah answered and said to him, “Is there any portion or inheritance left to us in our father’s house?

- b. 15 Are we not regarded by him as foreigners? For he has sold us, and he has indeed devoured our money.
- c. 16 All the wealth that God has taken away from our father belongs to us and to our children. Now then, whatever God has said to you, do.”
- 5. So both Rachel and Leah respond positively to the new family relationship and are willing to go
- 6. Jacob, on the other hand, knows that he’s in for trouble with Laban
  - a. So he resolves to leave under cover of darkness
- 7. Fortunately, God warns Laban in a dream not to antagonize Jacob
  - a. He pursues and overtakes the fleeing family
  - b. Jacob recounts his mistreatment
  - c. They agree to part ways, do no harm to each other
  - d. Laban says goodbye to daughters and grandchildren

## IX. Divorce

- A. Modern divorce bears little resemblance to separation in Genesis
  - 1. But some similar dynamics are in play
  - 2. Example – Abraham and Hagar
- B. Abraham’s marriage to Hagar was at the instigation of Sarah!
  - 1. That was according to the custom of the day – the use of a servant as a husband for the purposes of child-bearing
  - 2. In so doing, Sarah prevented Abraham from finding a concubine on his own
    - a. Sarah would retain authority and control
  - 3. But her machinations were contrary to God’s plan and betrayed her lack of trust in God
    - a. She multiplied the dissension in the household
  - 4. Even though contemporary cultural customs allow certain practices, that doesn’t mean believers should engage them
- C. The initial separation of Hagar from Abraham was also at Sarah’s instigation
  - 1. Hagar became arrogant as she was able to get pregnant
  - 2. **Genesis 16:5** (ESV) —
    - a. 5 And Sarai said to Abram, “May the wrong done to me be on you! I gave my servant to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. May the LORD judge between you and me!”
  - 3. Abraham was perplexed as to what to do about the conflict
  - 4. **Genesis 16:6** (ESV) —
    - a. 6 But Abram said to Sarai, “Behold, your servant is in your power; do to her as you please.” Then Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she fled from her.
  - 5. So the separation happened, not officially, but when Sarah made life so difficult for Hagar that she left
  - 6. Hagar, in desperation, receives a visitation from the Lord

- a. He encourages her to return and submit to Sarah and her authority
  - b. He gives her assurances concerning her son
- 7. Hagar and Ishmael return, but eventually are sent away permanently
  - a. Due to rivalry between the families within the family
  - b. Ishmael was found mocking the toddler Isaac
  - c. Sarah could not tolerate that – insists that Abraham send her away
  - d. Abraham does that after getting assurances from God that Ishmael will be blessed
- 8. Hagar and Ishmael are distressed, but God provides
  - a. And eventually Ishmael grows and prospers
  - b. Speaks to the difficulty of the divorced single parent
- D. Jesus and NT specify proper grounds for divorce
  - 1. Rooted in God’s intention on Malachi
  - 2. **Malachi 2:16** (NASB95) —
    - a. 16 “For I hate divorce,” says the LORD, the God of Israel, “and him who covers his garment with wrong,” says the LORD of hosts. “So take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously.”
  - 3. Matthew 19 – marital infidelity
  - 4. Our culture recognizes many marital difficulties that may lead to divorce
    - a. But Jesus only recognizes one
  - 5. That was difficult to hear even in Jesus’ day
  - 6. **Matthew 19:10** (ESV) —
    - a. 10 The disciples said to him, “If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.”
  - 7. Jesus acknowledges that some will in fact remain unmarried
    - a. But he doesn’t budge on the issue that only infidelity should invalidate a marriage
- E. The example of Hagar more corresponds to the abuse situation
  - 1. There are limits in abusive relationships that may necessitate leaving
- F. Hagar also illustrates that there is life after divorce
  - 1. Life will certainly be different
  - 2. But when God is involved, He can provide for the divorced person and children
  - 3. And there is opportunity for the church to provide what is lacking in the dissolved family