

**Series: God & Man & Woman #770**

**Title: Genesis 2.18, Part 5**

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world! It's good to have you with us, as always. Let me read again our text for us and then we will pick-up where we left off last time. Genesis 2, verse 18 reads, **"<sup>18</sup> Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.'"** I've split this verse in two parts in order to teach its meaning. We dealt with the Word of God, **"It is not good for the man to be alone..."** And then I gave you five observations I have made of the second part when God says, **"...I will make him a helper suitable for him."** Do you remember the five observations? Here is a refresher.

**Number one: notice that God will make the first woman. God says, "I will make..." Number two: notice that God makes male and female. Number three: man is made first, then woman. In the order of the creation of male and female, male is made first and female is made second. Number four: this word "helper" is important. My fourth observation is best put as a question: what does "helper" mean? And number five: since it is not good that man be alone and then God makes woman, there must be certain things man cannot do alone that he can do with the woman. The woman is essential to the man.** These are the observations and yesterday we covered the first three.

Now we come to observations four and five. Let's get this word "helper" on our minds and push it also into our hearts. God says that He is going to make the first man – who must not be alone – a "helper suitable for him." What does the word helper mean? It is important we get this right. Women will be particularly interested in how the Bible uses this word, because it is descriptive of you. But gentlemen, follow along closely. Pay attention, because this all has to do with who the woman is in relation to the man. I find there can be a lot of confusion as to how God defines the relationship of man and woman in the Bible. Christians often seem never quite sure how to follow God on the relational dynamic of man and woman, especially in the context of marriage, which we are coming to.

May I suggest to you that properly and carefully defining this word "helper" will, well...help! If we can get this word right, then what follows in Genesis 2, and really throughout the whole of Scripture will be better understood. This is why I want to spend time on this one word.

And there I have told a slight fib, a lie. And the reason for this is we're actually going to look at two words: helper and suitable, because in the Hebrew language these go together. But, our emphasis in the English is on helper. We do not typically trip up on the word "suitable" in our debates about woman as helper to the man. We get stuck on the term helper. So, let me try (by the grace and wisdom of God) to bring some clarity to you on this as we end another week together.

And a fair warning up front, this will take us a little concentrated time. This phrase in Hebrew ("helper suitable") appears twice in Genesis 2. Actually it occurs only twice in the entire Bible. It is here at verse 18 and then again in verse 20. I mention this, because we have to be careful to tie the two instances, the two uses, together. God does. So, let me show you this in the text.

I'll re-read Genesis 2.18b, **"I will make him a helper suitable for him."** And now I read Genesis 2.20, **"<sup>20</sup> The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him."** Did you hear our two words again? "Helper suitable." As we will see when we look at verses 19 and 20 in-depth, the creation of the animals, God contrasts man and woman with the animals. That is, people are different than the animals. Man and woman bear the image of God. Animals do not! Man and woman bear the image of God. Animals do not! Hang in here with me pet lovers. I am one also. But surely you would agree that you are a different being than Dudley the Dog or Kitty the Cat!

By using "helper suitable" what God is saying is this: **among the animals there is not a helper suitable for the man. Therefore, God will create the woman, who is a helper suitable for the man.** Let me lay that on you again at the end of what may have been a very busy day and week. Among the animals there is not a helper suitable for the man. Therefore, God will create the woman, who is a helper suitable for the man. Hence, we have the twice-used "helper suitable." Once at verse 18 to describe how the woman will

function in relationship to the man, and once in verse 20 to contrast man and woman from animals. Are you with me?

No? Well then may I suggest if you are listening to this as a podcast, rewind? If you are listening to this on your radio, go to my website, get the podcast and listen to this again.

As we peer into this phrase “helper suitable” this is my first insight. Now, second, the word “helper,” or taken together in the Hebrew, “helper suitable” means counterpart. The woman is the man’s counterpart. Literally, “a helper as his counterpart.” And/or, corresponding to, an exact correspondence. The woman corresponds to the man. And/or, we can define this as a partnership, a true partnership. Woman is in partnership with the man (man finds in the woman a true partnership). I *love* that. Woman and man in partnership together. As John Calvin puts it, the woman is the “inseparable associate of [the man’s] life (131).” (The woman is the “inseparable associate of [the man’s] life.)

Again, I encourage you to pause this podcast, rewind a bit and hear that again, or get over to my website this weekend right and in the center of the homepage find this podcast and hit the play arrow. My website is [godisministry.org](http://godisministry.org) (that’s [godisministry.o-r-g](http://godisministry.o-r-g)).

Ladies and gentlemen, that is what the Bible means when it says that woman is a “helper suitable” for the man. God makes a helper suitable for the man. She is woman. God makes Eve for Adam. Eve will be Adam’s counterpart, his exact correspondence, a true partner Eve will be in partnership with Adam. She will be his inseparable associate. Well, this certainly puts the woman on the same level as the man, doesn’t it? As I said earlier this week – maybe even yesterday, woman is *not* inferior to the man. She is *not* inferior! As Derek Kidner puts it in his commentary on Genesis, “the sexes are complimentary (65).” The sexes, male and female, are complimentary.

OK. We are going to find there is more to this when we get down to the marriage between Adam and Eve. So, if you want more on this, if you continue with us, you will get more. I promise. And I do understand this is all very practical. What has been said today, and certainly what is coming on man and woman in the partnership of marriage, well you cannot get more practical than that. Are you married? Are you engaged to be married? Were you married? Are you single and debating the merits of marriage? The first man and the first woman were married to one another, and the world’s first wedding takes place here in Genesis 2. Stay tuned!

But for now, still back in Genesis 2, verse 18, we have defined what the Bible means by the word “helper,” a “helper suitable.” I hope this is clear to you. And with the time we have left, let’s pivot to my fifth and final observation of this verse (Genesis 2.18). Here it is again: since it is not good that man be alone and then God makes woman, there must be certain things man cannot do alone that he can do with the woman. The woman is essential to the man. Here, I am going to borrow from Robert Harbach and his helpful, well researched book *Studies in the Book of Genesis*. Harbach is spelled H-a-r-b-a-c-h if you want to purchase his book.

I see again that click, clock goes that clock, so what I will do is give you the four things man cannot do without the woman and then when we meet together on Monday I will say more about them. Drawing from Pastor Harbach, here are four things the first man cannot do without the first woman.

First, without the woman man cannot express his God-given social and friendly nature.

Second, without the woman man cannot fulfill God’s command to “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.” Without the woman there was no sexual intercourse, no pregnancy, and no birth. Man needs the woman to fulfill God’s command to propagate.

Third, without the woman man cannot begin the group that will become the elect people of God. Without the woman man cannot begin the group that will become the elect people of God.

And fourth, without the woman man cannot by the means by which Jesus Christ enters the world as the *perfect* man, to be the willing sacrifice for our sins.

We will come back to to this on Monday, right here on God Is!

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