



## Week of March 6 Fit to be Tied<sup>1</sup>

### **Overview:**

Did you ever wonder...Why are we here? How did all of this come to be? What are the origins of our universe, our story, and our purpose? In the first eleven chapters of Genesis, we see a cosmic story unfolding—an epic narrative of God shaping a good and meaningful world, what went wrong, and how God is redeeming the mess and restoring us to something good. Over the next several weeks, we will explore new ways to study this narrative and learn how to apply those tools to all of Scripture.

### **Group Objectives:**

- Reflect on this past Sunday's message and other devotional reading.
- Pray together and provide encouragement for other group members.
- Consider how being made in God's image affects our relationships with spouses, friends, and even enemies.

### **DNA statement(s) tie-in:**

- *We do life together.* Community is our middle name. Every person of every generation is wanted, needed, and known. And there's always room for one more.

### **Conversation Starters:**

- Who was your best friend when you were young? What made your relationship so special?

### **Read and Reflect: Bible Study Discussion**

*As God's creation comes into being, God describes everything as good – except one: “It is not good for man to be alone” (Genesis 2:18). God himself lives in relationship with the Son and the Spirit (what we call the Trinity) and God desires to live in relationship with us. Not only that, God designed us to live in relationships with one another. One of those relationships is the covenant of marriage.*

*The narrative in Genesis 2 shows us that God's intent for marriage<sup>2</sup> was to be between one man and one woman. In this perfect world before the fall, male and female come from parts of the same whole and are complete only in communion with one another. The husband leaves his family and cleaves to his wife. The man and woman live alongside each other, naked and unashamed. Relationships based on shame, blame, power, and submission only come into place **after** the fall in Genesis 3.*

*As your group begins, pull out “Origins: Genesis 1 & 2 Comparison” for reference throughout the conversation. It can be found in the back of the Origins notebook or at [www.ccomaha.org/origins](http://www.ccomaha.org/origins)*

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<sup>1</sup> This week's lesson was written by Dawn Gentry.

<sup>2</sup> This is also affirmed by Jesus in Matthew 19:5-6.

- **Read Genesis 1:26-29; Genesis 2:15-17**

- What are some of the similarities you notice between these two texts? What are some differences?<sup>3</sup>
- Why do you think God gave the humans a garden in which to work?
- Why is it important that God made humans in God's own image?<sup>4</sup>

- **Read Genesis 2:18-25**

*Having Adam name the animals calls attention to the fact that there is no other creation "like" him. Since it was "not good for the man to be alone," God made an **ezer kenegdo** for him. Translations for this Hebrew phrase include "helper suitable" (NIV, NASB), "helper as his partner" (NRSV), "helper fit for [him]" (ESV), "helper comparable" (NKJV), and "companion who corresponds" to him (NET).*

- How do these various translations deepen your understanding of how a husband and wife should relate to one another?<sup>5</sup>
- Why do you think the woman was formed from the man's *rib* / *side* (rather than the head or the foot)?<sup>6</sup>
- How does the idea of "one flesh" carry meaning beyond a couple's sexual union to their day-to-day relationship?

- **Read Philippians 2:1-15**

*God does not call all believers to the covenant of marriage. Community is just as important for single followers of Jesus. God **does** call each of us into a lifestyle of humility, service, and Christlikeness. These characteristics benefit all relationships, whether married or single.*

- List some of the characteristics you find in this text that describe an imitator of Christ. (*encouragement, compassion, sympathy, love, humility, servant, obedient, blameless*)
- Share about an experience with a friend or spouse who behaved like Jesus with you.

### **Respond and Pray:**

- How do these passages stand in contrast to the curses and consequences of Genesis 3?
- How can the church help remedy the problem that it is "not good to be alone" for all people? Why is this important?

### **For further study:**

- Bible Project Video – Image of God - <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/image-of-god/>
- On marriage, singleness, and divorce – Matthew 19:1-11, 1 Corinthians 7:1-40
  - "Singleness and Remarriage" and "Human Sexuality," C&MA Perspectives, [www.cmalliance.org/who-we-are/what-we-believe/perspectives/](http://www.cmalliance.org/who-we-are/what-we-believe/perspectives/)
  - *Seven Myths about Singleness*, Sam Allberry, (Crossway, 2019)
- On marriage, headship, and mutuality – 1 Corinthians 11:1-16, Ephesians 5:, Song of Solomon
  - "A More Beautiful Picture," Marg Mowczko, [www.margmowczko.com/beautiful-picture-male-headship-female-submission/](http://www.margmowczko.com/beautiful-picture-male-headship-female-submission/)
  - "Mutuality, Mystery, and Marriage," Dawn Gentry, [www.cbeinternational.org/resource/article/priscilla-papers-academic-journal/mutuality-mystery-and-marriage-love-song-songs/](http://www.cbeinternational.org/resource/article/priscilla-papers-academic-journal/mutuality-mystery-and-marriage-love-song-songs/)

Additional resources are at [cccomaha.org/origins](http://cccomaha.org/origins), or contact the Adult Ministries team with questions.

<sup>3</sup> In the first two chapters of Genesis, the Hebrew word *adam* is alternately translated either humans, humankind, man, or the man and no gendered differences appear until 2:23 when the Hebrew words *ish* (male/man) and *ishshah* (woman/female) appear. *Harper Collins Study Bible, NRSV*, Harold W Attridge, editor, notes on Genesis 2:18-23, page 9.

<sup>4</sup> "In the ancient world, an image was believed to carry the essence of that which it represented. . .the deity's work was thought to be accomplished through the idol." John Walton et al, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary, Old Testament*, 29.

<sup>5</sup> "There is nothing whatsoever in the expression *ezer kenegdô* that implies the subordination of the woman in Genesis 2. Instead, it has the meanings of strength and similarity." Marg Mowczko, <https://margmowczko.com/kenegdo-meet-subordinate-suitable-or-similar/> (accessed 3.2.22)

<sup>6</sup> Walton notes that the word "rib" may be related to the Sumerian term for "life" or the Egyptian word meaning "clay" (from which the man was previously made.) John Walton et al, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary, Old Testament*, 31.