



## SESSION TWO

### Look at God the Designer and Builder

We want to take just a moment to review with our first definition. My understanding of a Christian family is surely not an American family that is moral. It is not even an American family in which all are Christians. Do you realize that you can have a group of people related by marriage and kinship—all of whom are believers in Jesus Christ—and as a family, it will be in shambles? Does that shock you? It shouldn't if you understand a *biblical* definition of a Christian family. A Christian family is one that God Himself, by His supernatural power, is building. If your marriage—if your family—is something you have *done*, I would commend you for what you've done. But that's not Christian. That's not God working. God is the Architect, the Planner, and He's given His plan. And God is the builder and *He* must do it. That's a Christian family.

And in Genesis, chapter 2 God gives the blueprint: three words. Can you tell me the three words? Verse 24, "Therefore shall a man. . ." what? "*Leave* his father and mother." *Leave*. That tells me something about the importance of marriage. And God has put it above every other human relationship. Your marital relationship is more important than your ministry, more important than your children, more important than your church connections and your anything else. That *must* come first in God's economy.

The second word, "A man shall leave his father and mother, and shall. . ." what? Cleave! Do you know how long this marital relationship is to last? It is the only permanent human relationship that God has established.

And now this last one. And this, in one word, gives me God's blueprint as to the *essence* of the marital relationship: "*and they shall be one flesh.*" That has to do with the relationship, the essence, the intimacy, the totality of this relationship between two human beings, male and female. "And they shall be. . ." say it once more with me! They shall be what? One! That is the essence of marriage. They shall be so related without hurting, destroying, putting down, inferior, or hindering the development of either one. They are so intimately related, they function as one. That is God's absolute standard for the relationship. And I want to present to you in the rest of this session the ultimate reality.

You say, "Why? I don't care to get that deeply involved with my wife or my husband; I don't—, I'm—" My friend, listen to me. Listen, don't misunderstand me. It is not just preachers laying on you. It is not the church telling you this. It is not even just the Bible that tells you this. It is deeper than that. It is the most amazing idea that God has ever put in my mind from this book about marriage. Do you know why you must have this kind of relationship? Listen to me. Behind the plan which says you are to be increasingly one—behind the plan—is the *Planner*. And in this hour I want you to look at the Planner Himself. And there you'll see ultimate reality.

Turn with me back to Genesis, chapter 1, verse 26. God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, over the cattle, over all the earth, over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. And God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him." Now, how many of you see the phrase that is repeated four times? Do you see it? What is it? "God created man"—say it—"in His image." Do you know what that means? I ask for your undivided-heart attention. I don't see how you can ever deal with marriage and family if you don't begin with this.

Before there was anything on this earth there was God. God was—in *all eternity past*. It is hard for us to even think like that. Before there was anything here that is *so real* to us. These things are just created, temporary things. Before there was *anything* here, God was. And God was complete and He didn't need anything. Don't you ever think He needed us! He didn't need anything. But in His wonderful wisdom and love and mercy and grace, and all that He is, He says, "I want to create." Here's God—all that He is, and He was. And then one day He said, "We are going to make . . ." And He made the stage, this little old earth, this universe that we think is *so*—. Someday He'll snap His finger and it will all be gone. And then He said, "We are going to make human beings. And We are going to make them" how? "In Our image."

What does that mean, "created man in His own image"? And He, God, created man. Is that generic, or is that male? It is very clear it refers to all of them—*humanity*. "Let us make human beings in our image." Going to make them, and He makes this. Do you know what that is? That is in His image! This I know! It does not talk just about a *male*-man. Does it include female people? Yes or no? I don't care whether it's a male or a female. I don't care whether it's a man or a woman. Listen! In the image of God! That little one—that infant—in the image of God? Yes or no? Children are not in the image of God. Yes or no? You who have young children (laughter)? Yes or no? Granddaddies? Black, white—all human beings.

Now let's press on. "Created man in His own image." It has nothing to do with the physical aspect of man. This has nothing to do with my body. You don't think that when you look up here and see what I look like, that God looks like this? How do you know that's true? Because God has no—what? Say it! God has no *body*. God is a spirit. When He says, "God created us in His image," it has nothing to do with the physical.

It has to do with this: my concept of biblical psychology or the nature of a human being, as God created him. He created him body; that's body—and *soul*. And I'm suggesting to you for your careful consideration, that when God created human beings in His image, it had not to do with the body; it has to do with the soul. And *that* is the person. There's the person created in the image of God. But I'll tell you this: it's more than just this, what you call "moral"! The theologians have emphasized this—and so much so—and many of you in the churches have been brought up with that. So I have an idea, the more I mention the image of God, this thing comes up like a big—you know—"God is holy!" And I won't take away from that, but he's in the image of *God*. Do you know what that means? That that little infant you have, that little six-year-old that's about to run you up the wall, and that 16-year-old that you have difficulty understanding, they're all whatever God is as a person.

How many of you believe God is a person? Do you think He thinks? That's the reason *you* think. Do you think He talks? Do you think He communicates? That's the reason *you* communicate. Do you think He feels? Yes. That's the reason *you* feel. Do you think He makes choices? Yes. That's the reason *you* do. Do you know what I'm saying? I'm saying, and I hesitate to say it this way, everything that God does—the kinds of things He does—He says, "I want to make a human being to do the same kinds of things that I do, and he will be patterned after Me." I'm not thinking "morally." If something goes wrong with him so he's not functioning right, he's still got those capabilities as a person. That's my understanding. And I wish we had—we need a whole *week* on this—to understand what it means to be a human being as a person, with his great potentials—capabilities of doing the same kinds of things.

Does it bother you that man has put a moon floating around in orbit? I'm talking about all these satellites. "Why man, you're doing the...!" *Does it bother you?* Does it disturb your faith that man, it looks like he's on the verge of . . . and I'm not sure he's going to make it, but if he does, it won't bother *my* faith. Do you know he's on the verge of making *life*? Well, you say, "That's imp—!" Well, man what? He's in the image of God. It's amazing! You mean that little ole' ten-year-old boy?

Now let me give you the verse. Read the eighth Psalm sometime. And it says this: Psalm 8, especially verses 5 and 6—somewhere in there. I'll give you the idea just briefly. Watch it. Here's what the Psalmist says: He says, "O Jehovah, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth." Now, that must be translated. What that says is, "O Jehovah, what a wonderful person you are. All over the earth I see the manifestations of your glory. Oh, what a wonderful Person you are. How excellent is thy name in all the earth! What a wonderful person

you are.” And then he turns to this: “When I see the heavens, the stars, the moon that thy hand hath made.” Listen! “What is man, that you’re mindful of him? Or the son of man that you visit him?” Then he makes this statement: “Thou hast made him but little lower than God.” Some translations have it, “You made him a little lower than the angels.” The American Standard has, “You made him but little lower than God.” Do you know what that says? Every human being in his essential essence—I’m not talking about his spirituality or his morality, but as to the kind of thing he is—he’s a little lower than God.

Sometimes in my classes I’d call him and (it might not be wise for you to quote me on this), “He is a little ‘god.’” Do you know what that little infant is? He’s a little god. He’s still developing. Do you know what that teenager is? He’s a little god, created in the image of God. Do you know what that means in marriage? Look, marriage is a relationship between two of these persons. Some of the problems of marriage have to do with—. *You don’t know what that is.* And you don’t understand that that woman is a little god, and that man is a little god, and that child is a little god. I’ve had students in my classes; I’ve had them transformed by the mercy and grace of God as they’ve begun to realize that.

One old army sergeant told me (he’d been married 30 years), “I never realized that my wife was a person. And I went home and began acting, though, as she was a little person in the image of God.” His wife came and told me that for the first time in his 30 years, “I’m free.” I’ve had young married students tell me, with their little children, “I never realized this little girl three years old was a person. I’ve been dealing with her as a little plaything, as a kid. And how *different* she responds as a person, created in the image of God.” All the modern psychology that is trying to recapture this idea of personhood, and all this, and “You’ve got to deal with me as a person”—all that. Do you know where it all started? It didn’t start with modern psychology. It started with a Great Person here who decided—say it once more—to create man in what? “His own image,” as a person.

Now let’s move on. I’ll ask you again. How many of you believe God is a person? Do you believe the Bible teaches that? Do you think this is a good representation, then, of our God? He is a person! Do you realize that is theological heresy? And if you believe that, you are a heretic, and I’m going to write your pastor (laughter). That is theological heresy. Don’t look at me like that (laughter)! Do you know why? Go back to Genesis 1. Now, I’m not basing it just on this. If the Bible was not full of this and made it very clear so that all evangelical—all Bible-believing theologians—say the Bible clearly teaches it, I wouldn’t bring this out. But it is referred to in Genesis 1:26. The contrast in the other verses is very, very studied and clear.

So let’s take verse 24. “And God said, ‘Let the earth bring forth living creatures.’” And God said it. And all the creatures were made. Now watch the difference as He makes man. Verse 26, “And God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.’” What’s the difference? When He made the animals God said, and they were. When He comes to make man what is the radical change in the record? What do you see there in verse 26 you didn’t see before? “Let *us* make man in *our* image.” What does that imply? “Us” implies what? There is more than one. There’s your theological heresy. How many Persons, how many Persons there? “Let *us*.” How many? Oh! This is amazing. There are three of these wonderful Persons. They are *distinct* Persons and the Bible makes this very clear.

For example, when this Person came down and became a man incarnate to provide your salvation, the Father said to this One, “This is my beloved Son, hear ye Him.” And when He returned here the Scripture says, “And He (Jesus Christ) sent forth the Holy Spirit.” How many of you believe the Holy Spirit is a Person? Now you’re a heretic if you don’t. He thinks, He chooses, He acts; He does all that persons do, just as much as Jesus Christ or the Father. The Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit. Three Persons. “Let Us make man in Our image.”

Let me say one more thing. How many of you think Jesus Christ loves you? Do you believe . . . what do you sing to your children? “Jesus loves me . . .” How many of you believe the Holy Spirit loves you as much as Jesus does? You never sing it, do you? Do you know what I’m saying? Do you think the Father is all powerful? “Yeah, He made these mountains. He made—.” Do you think the Holy Spirit is just as powerful as the Father? Yeah. Do you know what I’m saying?

I'm saying what the theologians say. The theologians look at this and they say, "Yes, three Persons." Any difference? No. This is the way the theologian says it. Same in substance. Equal in power and glory. If you are not familiar with that theological concept, I think you ought to write it down because I'm going to make use of it. Same in substance. Equal in power and glory. Same in substance, they're all God; He's God, He's God, He's God. Same in substance. Equal in power and glory. God said, "Let Us make man in Our image." Now do you understand maybe a little more why it was not good that this—what—"man should be . . ." What? Say it, "alone"! Why? My friend, *He's not alone!* And if you're going to make them in "Our image," it is not good for him to be alone. "Let's make another one," and so He made another one. Eesh body male. Eesh-shah body female. Eesh, image of God. Eesha, image of God. Do you know what that means? He's a person; she's a person—in the image of God. Same in substance. Equal in power and glory.

I'm drawing what I believe is a legitimate analogy between God and this. That's the way He made man. This is the ultimate reality. It gives you a rationale and meaning to it if you press it back to the ultimate reality which is God Himself. And He said, "Let Us" —three Persons— "Let Us make man in our image." And He made them.

Now let's take one more step before we close. How many of you believe that God is three Persons? Are you committed to that? Do you realize that is also theological heresy? We've got a bunch of heretics (laughter). That is theological heresy. Do you know why? You now have—what? Three gods. That is polytheism, which is intolerable in Scripture. Put it in your notes, if you're taking notes, that great passage that almost characterized the nation of Israel. It's their great motto, Deuteronomy 6:4: "Hear O Israel: Jehovah, our Lord . . . is one Jehovah." The Hebrew scholars tell me that the word that is used there, "Jehovah, our Lord, is one," is not the word that indicates one. But it's this: the word that indicates a unity among those more than one. Do you know what the truth of Scripture is? I'm not professing in any sense to understand it, but it satisfies me more than any approach to the Trinity I've ever touched. I say again, I'm not a theologian. But I tell you this. In an absolute, *absolute* way, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit are so *intimately* related one with another—so intimate in that relationship—that they are . . . what? Say it: one God! How many of you believe there is only one God? There is only one God. How many understand that? The theologian says that is the mystery of the Trinity.

How can you have three distinct Persons, each one doing different things, and each one is a separate Person? They are not, you know, losing their identity in the other. Never. And yet so related that there is only one God. This God said, "Let Us make man in Our image." And so He says we are going to have two persons. "But these two persons if they're going to be in Our image must not only be free—free persons—like Us, but they also must be . . ." What? ". . . intimately related so that they are . . ." Say it: "one." You see the rationale. The rationale is the Planner Himself. It's in the very nature and essence of your God. I know there are other analogies, other beautiful illustrations of the marriage relationship in the Bible—especially in the New Testament—but I've never found anything as ultimate as this. The great ultimate model of marriage is God Himself. He says, "I want you like me."

Just like the ultimate standard of your morality, your spirituality. You want to be holy. Why? Why should you be holy? Because it makes you feel better. I'll guarantee you if you're holy you'll be happier. You'll be prosperous. I'll guarantee you if you'll be holy your things will go better. Even the New Testament says, "godliness is profitable for all things." But the ultimate reason for being holy is what? *For God is holy.* I'll say to you, the reason He wants husbands and wives to be one is not only that you'll be satisfied. You'll never be satisfied without it. It's not *only* that it'll be so good for your children, and we'll see that. And I'm more convinced of that today than I was four weeks ago. But I'll tell you this; the reason you ought to be one is because *they* are one.

I'll show you that as we close in the Gospel of John. I want to read just a couple of verses with you. The Lord Jesus is before His Father in this great prayer. He's praying for His disciples, these men whom God has given to Him. John 17, verse 11. Now watch what He says: "And I am no more in the world, and these are in the world, and I come to thee." Now watch this: "Holy Father . . ." Do you see this? The Lord Jesus, one Person of the Godhead, talking to His Father and He says, "Holy Father, keep them in thy name which thou hast given me. Oh, Father, keep them. Protect them. Oh, Father, guard them. And if you don't guard them, they'll

never be what they ought to be. Oh, Father, keep them.” What does He want them to be? Now, He is talking about His disciples. But may I tell you if it doesn’t work in your marriage, it will never work in the Church. See, He’s talking about His disciples and this is the seed of the Church. It’ll never be in the Church until it’s in the marriage. Now let’s apply it to the marriage: “Father, keep them, that they may be . . .” what? “One.” What’s the model? “*Even as we are.*” Do I have to say anymore? The Lord Jesus prayed, “Oh, Father, these are my disciples and they are going to become the Church.” If you cannot apply this to your marriage you’ll never have it in the Church. You must start at home.

Now let’s read a couple more verses. Drop down to verse 20. He says, “Neither for these only . . .” (that is, not just for these disciples) “. . . do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me.” Do you know one thing that will shock the world and make them know that Jesus Christ is the Savior and He has touched you, is what? This revolutionary idea that a husband and wife can be one. And after they’ve been married 36 years, still getting closer and closer together, and still love each other. That’s revolutionary. They’ll know that God has sent His Son and you are His disciples. Be one. How? Why? “*As we are one.*” That’s the blueprint. I’ll tell you, I’ve never found anything in the New Testament that talks about marriage that is not given in order that we might be one. I’ve never found a problem that the New Testament says, “Put it away,” that is not something that would divide a husband and wife and keep them from being one. The blueprint is what? Say it with me in your heart. That husband and wife may be what? One *as they are one*. How many think you can do that? By yourself? You’ll never do it; God must build it. And we’ll begin to see how God builds a marriage relationship after that blueprint.