

### OUR MISSION

As God's disciples, we the men, women and children of Apostles are united in the preaching, teaching and sharing of God's Word in its truth and purity.

By God's grace, we will nurture believers and joyfully spread the Word of God in our community and throughout the world, all to His glory.

# The Perfect Companion

Pastor Jay Bickelhaupt

**P**raise to God the Creator for all the wonderful gifts that he has given to us, his creation.

"Just ignore him and he will go away." I heard this advice spoken by my mother often as my sister complained about me, a pesky younger brother. Just ignore it and it will go away. All of us most likely follow this advice more often than not. At work we try to ignore various situations so we don't have to deal with angry co-workers or irrational tempers. We try to ignore physical aches and pains in the morning hoping that by the afternoon they simply go away. During the Holidays when family gets together maybe we try to ignore the bad jokes and awful humor of Uncle Charlie. Just ignore it and it will go away or at least we won't have to deal with it.

*It is not good for the man to be alone.*

We put this advice into practice for many situations, people, problems and personal arguments. Just ignore it and it will go away. The sad reality is that as sinners we apply this motto also to the teachings that God sets before us in his Holy Word. If what God says makes us uncomfortable or cramps our style, "Just ignore it and it will go away." That is what our society does and that is what the sinful heart in each of us loves to do. However, "the grass withers, and the flowers fall but the Word of God stands forever." The Lord's truth does not simply go away like a pesky little brother being ignored. Today God gives to us the privilege of focusing on the gift of family and more specifically the gift of roles that he assigned to man and women at the beginning of creation. As believers you and I cannot ignore the Word and will of God even if it makes us feel uncomfortable. Instead let us embrace the goodness of the creator by following his will when it comes to

marriage and the distinct roles that he gave to husbands and wives.

### **Praise the Creator for His Goodness**

**I**n the beginning of time, during the days of creation, God said let there be light. There was light and it was good. He said let there be dry ground, plants, fish, birds, animals and it was good. Everything God created was perfect. Then at the climax of creation he took some dust of the earth and formed a man and

*Genesis 2:18-24 (New International Version)*

*The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."*

*Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field.*

*But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.*

*The man said,*

*"This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man."*

*For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.*

breathed into him the breath of life. Adam came to be formed in the image of God. The first man was without sin living in a perfect world. It was good! Throughout chapter one of Genesis we hear these words again and again until you read verse 18 of the lesson. "The Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone.'" God himself recognized the need for the man

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to have a mate in life and wanted Adam to have a deep desire for a companion. So the Lord gave Adam a task on the first day of his life. God brought the animals that he created to man so that Adam could name them each according to their God given characteristics. And whatever he named them that was its name. God did not force an unsuitable companion on Adam but the Lord allowed Adam to express his thoughts. Every animal that walked before him had a mate. Every animal that he named was completely different from him without the ability to express emotions in a similar way, to love as man did, and to simply converse. It was not good and God created in man a deep longing for a suitable companion.

God did not simply say, "Let there be." No, he had in mind for the man something special, something unique from all creation. So with His power he caused the man to fall into a deep sleep in order to remove from him a rib with flesh. Out of that rib he created the most beautiful life in all creation. God created woman to complement man. The woman corresponded to the man physically, mentally, spiritually. She was man's perfect suitable helper. Man was created first and put in charge of the Garden of Eden. Adam was directly given the command not to eat from the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil." By doing this God marked man for human headship and for having the leadership role in the family. Woman was created specifically for what God calls the "helper role." In God's perfect world everything was good!

*In our world, however, not everything is good because of sin.*

In our world, however, not everything is good because of sin. And many times when talking about leadership roles and helper roles our sinful nature whispers to us, "Just ignore it and it will go away. Ignore it and you won't have to deal with it." Our Politically Correct world listens to such labels as "suitable helpers" and words like "submissive" and says, "This is not good." To own sinful minds the term helper is thought as to be an inferior role that has a lesser importance and lesser quality, which simply ignores God's goodness and purpose for making the different roles. Men, we are guilty of abusing the role of leadership every time that we use it as a club to control our wives and take an ego trip of power. Husbands, we are to love our wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. We are not to lord over them as a king

lords over a slave. Men, we fail in our role every time we fail to show love and concern for our wife with whom God has blessed us. Husbands, we have a role to carry out for the good of the family not for personal selfish gain. But it is not only the men who fail in their God given roles. Women, do we sometimes ignore the passage, "submit to your husband as the church submits to Christ," hoping that by ignoring it, it will simply go away? When we talk about the roles of men and women sometimes the intensity fills the air as the hairs on the back of the neck stand up and the defensive walls are built high. Thoughts such as, "I will not let any man tell me what to do! I don't need someone to be head or leader over me!" Our society has entirely lost the meaning of the roles of men and women and the sad reality is that our hearts lose sight of God's gift all too often. We have ignored God's will in our lives for too long, scared that we will offend someone in the politically correct world in which we live.

God gave the roles for the good of the family. He dealt out to you and to me, to men and to women, divinely ordained assignments with distinctive responsibilities for the best interest of family. But that is where the problem so often lies. Many times, men, if we examine our hearts, are we more interested in ourselves than the good of our loved ones? Selfishly, do we take and take without giving back? "The time that we have off belongs to us and the family can wait. It is our life and if that means shirking the responsibilities I have as a father then so be it." We too quickly ignore the fact that when husband and wife are joined in marriage the two become one flesh, one in purpose for the good of the family not for the good of sinful selfish me. Men, you are the leaders of the family. Are you acting like it? Are you setting a good example in your faith life? Do your children, does your wife, see you study the Word and then see you live the Gospel? Do you use positive encouragement in your speech to show love and respect to the family God has given you, or do you simply allow yourself to fail in carrying out your responsibility as head of the house? Wives, how often do we get frustrated and simply assume headship? To put it crassly, how many of us boast or take pride in wearing the pants in the family, which is boasting in sin that does not benefit the family or you. Instead of encouraging our husbands in their leadership do we nag them and resent their God given role? Ignore it and it will go away. That might hold true if we were discussing some man made rules and opinions but we are not. At the beginning God created man and women in his perfect world to carry out their specific roles in love. Contrary to popular belief and practice marriage is not built around competition but cooperation.

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Men show their love to God by being a servant leader in the marriage, humbling themselves and loving their wives as they love their own bodies. And men, if you strive to show your wives (and understand that it is God's will that you do show your wives) the love that Christ showed to us you will never make your wife feel inferior or worthless. Women recognize that God has blessed you with the role of being a servant helper. Show your love to God by supporting your husband and following his God given leadership all for the welfare of the family.

### ***Praise the Creator by following His Will***

**N**ow, there are many couples who like to dance. I think that it is awesome when a couple dances to Texas Swing and floats across the dance floor. What is the only way that a dance is going to work? There is one leader and one partner. If there were two leaders it would not be called a dance but chaos as they trip over each other and become highly frustrated as they pull and push. Isn't the pulling and pushing exactly what brings stress to a marriage when a husband does not fulfill his role and a wife steps out of hers? We cannot ignore what God teaches us for our good. Instead, I think all of us need to confess that our sinful hearts many times try to ignore what God's will is for us. We have to confess our failures as husbands who neglect our responsibilities because of selfish desires. We have to confess as wives who have not supported their husbands as we should but instead selfishly stepped out of the role as helper into the role of leadership. Confess and turn from the sinful pride that does not allow you to live according to God's holy will. Take responsibility for your family by laying your failures at the foot of the cross and take up the forgiveness that empowers you to say "Yes Lord, may your will be done always in my life."

I am not going to force you to listen to my man made opinions about marriage. But instead I want you to listen to our God speak to us his love. Out of love he created man with the desire to have a suitable companion with whom he could live and work. Out of His goodness God presented the most beautiful gift of creation to man. Out of love God gave to you and to me two distinct roles for the benefit of the family. Out of love God gave to us his one and only Son who gave his life to forgive us for our failures as men and women. Out of love Jesus gave us his sacrifice and grace so that we would have the power to put our love into action. It is out of love and for love that God gave us the gift of the roles of men and women. Men, we too should follow Adams example. When God brought the woman to him he did not take her for granted or ignore her. Instead he fully realized the gift that had been given and cherished her as bone of his bone

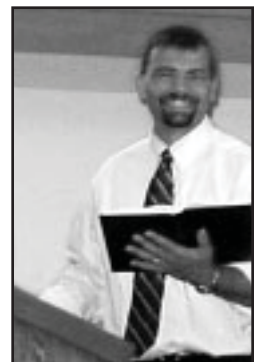
and flesh of his flesh. We need to, and with Jesus' love and forgiveness can, cherish our spouse for what they really are: precious gifts from our creator.

And as individuals who are filled with the Spirit and love of God the roles are not a burden but they simply come as fruits of faith. They come naturally from hearts that love and respect the creation, the spouse that God has placed in our lives. As married couples, cherish the gift that God has presented to you. As single individuals, support your married friends and family members. Encourage them with God's love to praise their Lord for the gift of the roles we have and then to put these roles into action all for the glory and love of Jesus Christ.

There are many things we like to ignore but God's Word isn't one of them. It is my prayer that you and I will continue to study what God's will is for us in marriage. May he bless all of you with peace and a stronger relationship.

***Lord God many times we failed to faithfully carry out our roles as husbands and as wives. We lay our failures at your feet and are confident that you forgive us. May the peace of your forgiveness empower us all to humbly submit to your will and simply treat others like you teach: in love and respect. Be with the families in our community and in our church. May their love for their Savior grow and increase so that their love for each other grows also. We ask all this in the name of Jesus, the Lord and ruler of our hearts and lives. Amen.***

*Jay Bickelhaupt is serving as pastor at Apostles Evangelical Lutheran Church in Billings, Montana. For contact information, please visit us at [www.apostlesmt.net](http://www.apostlesmt.net).*



Apostles Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Billings, Montana

**Worship Services** Sunday at 10:30 a.m. and Monday at 6:30 p.m.

**Sunday School and Adult Bible Classes** Sunday at 9:15 a.m.

**Men's Bible Study** Monday morning at 6:30 a.m.

**Heights Bible Study** Tuesday evening at 7:00 p.m.

**Women's Study** Wednesday morning at 10:00 a.m.

Contact the pastor at (406) 656-7141 about the opportunities to join a **Bible Information Class**.

More information and resources are available on our website at [www.apostlesmt.net](http://www.apostlesmt.net) or by contacting the church office at (406) 656-7141.

*Inside: This Week's Sermon*

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