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*The Marriage of Heaven and Earth*

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Read **Genesis 2:18-25** (NIV):

The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." 19 Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. 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. 20 So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals.

But for Adam no suitable helper was found. 21 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 then closed up the place with flesh. 22 Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

23 The man said,

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

24 That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh. Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

Icebreaker: Name one of your favorite romance movies or stories, and tell what you like about it.

1. Bobby said that the structure of the marriage relationship is a 1 – 2 – 1 pattern. What did he mean by this?
2. Matt Canlis said, "Adam needs a companion, a partner, someone other than himself to answer God's call to be in God's image as communal beings. It takes a plurality of people for God to be rightly seen. The point of verse 18 is not that we need romance; we need community. God looked with delight at his children not just because they looked like him, but because they did not look like each other. Adam and Eve are non-identical twins. It was never God's intention to have his children's unity based on being the same, but to learn to love people different from themselves. God's ideal is unity based on different people learning to love one another out of a love for God."

Why was God's plan to create unity out of two people who are different from one another better than if he had simply created unity out of two people who were the same?

3. The creation story demonstrates God's love for diversity and many-ness. There are many opposites mentioned in this story. What does this communicate about God and about his desire for your life?
4. In **Genesis 1:26**, God said, "Let us make man in our image." What is the significance of the plural pronouns here? What further implications flow out of this?
5. Read **Genesis 1:26**: Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

What was God's intent when he commissioned humans to "rule" over his creation?

6. What does the word "helper" in **Genesis 2:18** mean? How is this word most often used in Scripture, and what does that communicate about God's intention in this passage?
7. What significance and meaning is in the seemingly odd statement, "Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame."?
8. Read **Ephesians 5:31-32**: "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.

What does this add to your understanding of God's design and purpose for marriage? What does God want to communicate through marriage?

9. If you're married, what are some ways your spouse has made you want to be a better person? How has your spouse brought out the best in you? If you're single, share how one of your friends brings out the best in you.

10. What did you sense God saying to you through this passage and this message?