

INTERLOCKED

A Bible study integrating the Genesis-to-Revelation narrative, doctrine and apologetics for believers to live as thriving disciples of Christ.

Written by
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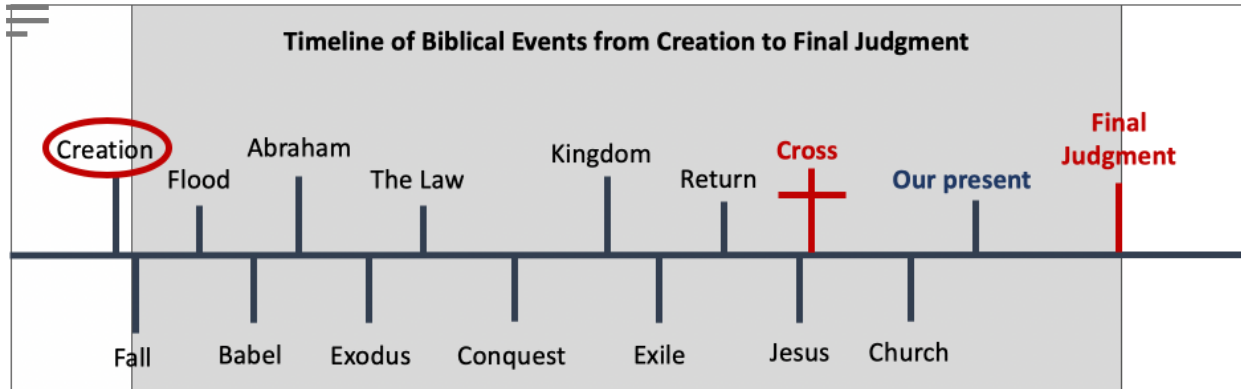
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A FAMILY-FRIENDLY EDITION OF THE BIBLE FRAMEWORK

Lesson 1: Origin of the Divine Institutions

Introduction

In this study, our focus is on God, His plan for the world, and how He directs history. In this first lesson, we will start at the very beginning of the Bible, at Creation.



We will see how God created the world and what is so unique about the way He did it. We also want to examine God's design for mankind's social structures. Some believers may think the social structures God established are common sense but the reality is that many people in the world would not agree. Each of the points in today's lesson make God, the Bible and what it teaches unique. We must not take them for granted but grasp them well in order for us to better understand how the world's view contrasts with the Bible's view.

Out of Nothing

The Bible opens by simply stating how God created all things in the beginning. We note from the very first verses that there is no one else helping in the process of creating. It is God alone. Because He is the sole creator, He is worthy to be praised. And as the creator, everything He makes belongs to Him.

Revelation 4:11

"You are worthy, O Lord our God,
to receive glory and honor and power.
For you created all things,
and they exist because you created what you pleased."

One important point to note is **how God creates**. The biblical record shows that God created everything "out of nothing". God did not need tools or any pre-existing material. He did not need to morph something from something else. There was once nothing. And then God spoke and He created everything "out of nothing". No one can create something out of nothing. Only God can.

Greek "ex nihilo" = "out of nothing"

A second feature is that God creates **simply by speaking**. Words and language are very important to God. We know that our words have the power to help, heal or hurt. But God's word is immensely different from ours. His words have such power that He can create just with words. It is His word that created the known universe. This is completely unique: to produce material from nothing and to do so with words. Just through the creation account we see God's power and recognise He is all-powerful.

Psalm 33:6–9

- ⁶ The LORD merely spoke,
and the heavens were created.
He breathed the word,
and all the stars were born.
- ⁷ He assigned the sea its boundaries
and locked the oceans in vast reservoirs.
- ⁸ Let the whole world fear the LORD,
and let everyone stand in awe of him.
- ⁹ For when he spoke, the world began!
It appeared at his command.

Jeremiah 32:17

“O Sovereign LORD! You made the heavens and earth by your strong hand and powerful arm. Nothing is too hard for you! **God is all-powerful!**

God is not just all-powerful, He is also everywhere present at the same time.











Psalm 139:7–12

- ⁷ I can never escape from your Spirit!
I can never get away from your presence! **God the Creator, is not part of His creation.**
- ⁸ If I go up to heaven, you are there;
if I go down to the grave, you are there.
- ⁹ If I ride the wings of the morning,
if I dwell by the farthest oceans,
- ¹⁰ even there your hand will guide me,
and your strength will support me.
- ¹¹ I could ask the darkness to hide me
and the light around me to become night—
- ¹² but even in darkness I cannot hide from you.
To you the night shines as bright as day.
Darkness and light are the same to you.

This is what God created in six days. In the first three days, He created the domains. And in the next three days, He created occupants for the domains. God is very orderly and not chaotic in His planning and execution.

On Day 1, God being light was the directional light.
 No sun was required.

Six-Day Pattern

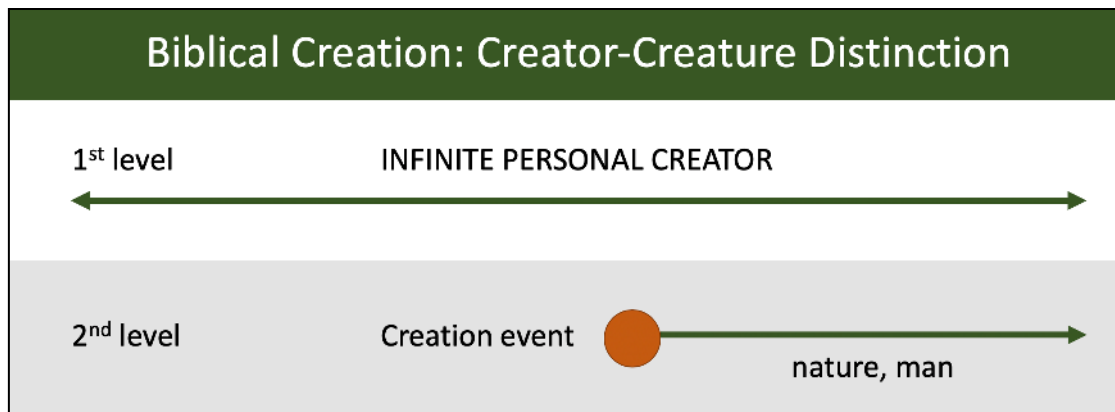
First 3 Days: Domains		Second 3 days: Occupants	
	 Domain of light and darkness God created time, space & matter.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sun for day Moon and stars for night 	 
	 Domain of sea and atmosphere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fish for sea Birds for atmosphere 	 
	Domain of land + plants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Animals for land Man to rule fish, birds, animals 	 

When we are expecting a new baby, we prepare the baby’s bedroom, the baby’s clothes, bottles, towels and toys. In the same way, God was preparing everything for His most important creation—man. [Psalm 115:16](#) The heavens belong to the Lord, but he has given the earth to all humanity

Creator-Creature Distinction

In the Bible, there is a very clear Creator-creature distinction. This means there are two separate levels of being that never cross over.

1. At the first level, there is God, who is an infinite, personal Creator.
2. At the second level, there is created man and nature.



What the Creator-creature distinction means is that God is distinct or separate from man and nature.

God is not in any way dependent on man or on nature for anything. He is wholly self-contained. Rather, everything God created is dependent on Him. This is God's description of Himself.

Psalm 50:12–13

¹² If I were hungry, I would not tell you,
for all the world is mine and everything in it.
¹³ Do I eat the meat of bulls?
Do I drink the blood of goats?

Again, this is what the apostle Paul says of God.

Acts 17:24–25 Our Creator God is self-contained and has no needs. We depend on Him.

²⁴ "He is the God who made the world and everything in it. Since he is Lord of heaven and earth, he doesn't live in man-made temples, ²⁵ and human hands can't serve his needs—for he has no needs. He himself gives life and breath to everything, and he satisfies every need.

It is important for us to understand that the Creator God is totally unique!

Isaiah 46:9

Remember the things I have done in the past.
For I alone am God!
I am God, and there is none like me.

And at the second level, it is also important to see that man is distinct from God and nature, and nature is also distinct from God and man.

The Unique Design of Man

When God created the world, He created it perfect. In His design, mankind—both male and female—were made in God's image.



Genesis 1:26–27

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground."

²⁷ So God created human beings in his own image.
In the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

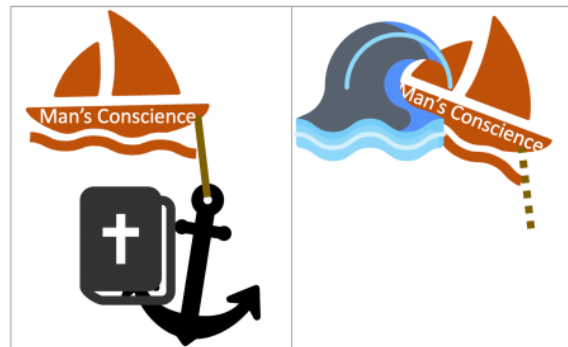
God forbade all idols.
Man is made in God's image.
Only man is the authorised image / representative of God.

What does being created in God's image mean?

Simply put, it means that man shares some of God's attributes, but in man, these attributes are finite or limited when compared with God.

Here are some examples: [God has an impersonal love - He loves us regardless of our behaviour. His love is based on Himself, not us the object of His love.](#)

- **God is all-loving.** His love is perfect and it is not dependent on the object of love being good or not.
 - **In contrast:** Mankind has the ability to love, but it is not a perfect love. Man’s love often depends on the words, actions, behaviours and choices of the object of love.
- **God is all-knowing.** His knowledge is perfect. He is never short of knowledge.
 - **In contrast:** Mankind has some knowledge, but man’s knowledge is incomplete and imperfect and it has to be learned.
- **God can do anything** (compatible with His character). He never tires and never needs anything.
 - **In contrast:** Mankind through effort can do some things. But man gets exhausted and needs food, water and rest.
- **God is holy.** As the Creator of everything, God is the ultimate authority on right and wrong. In Himself, He expresses what is right and does what is right all the time.
 - **In contrast:** Man has a conscience, the internal ability to tell right from wrong. But unlike God’s holiness, man is a created being whose conscience needs to be anchored to an external authority, that is, God. And when that external authority is ignored, then man’s conscience will cease to work properly.



Creator-Creature Distinction					
1 st level CREATOR (Yahweh)	Infinite	All-loving	All-knowing	All-Powerful	Holy
2 nd level creature (man)	finite	limited in love	incomplete, imperfect knowledge and understanding	limited in ability	conscience must be tied to the Creator-God

Many sins can be traced back to the failure to recognise the Creator-creature distinction.

Genesis 1 provides the overview of the Creation. Genesis 2 provides the details to Genesis 1.

God refers to "us" Let us make human beings in our image - The Triune God - Three distinct persons
 Isaiah 61:1a The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
 because the Lord has anointed me

If you say your God can do anything, does it mean your God can lie?

A common response that believers give to this statement is: "Yes, but He chooses not to." Is this true? [Important here to understand the Creator-creature distinction.](#)

Here is where it is important to understand the implication of what it means by:

- God and man are on two separate levels. We cannot fully understand God based on who we are. Though man is an image of God, God is vastly different from man.
- God is infinite. He has an infinite or unlimited amount of good qualities and attributes.

What is a lie? A lie itself is not an attribute. A lie is the absence of truth. To give other examples: What is a hole? A hole is the absence of dirt or soil. What is being tired? It is the absence of strength. What is darkness? It is an absence of light.

As humans, we all have some level of truth in us. When it is easy, convenient or when there are no bad consequences, we tell the truth. But we have limits. For example, when telling the truth will get us into deep trouble or when we risk losing the trust of family and friends, we lie. When we lie, we are showing the lack of several attributes: truth, goodness, love. We show we are finite and therefore limited.



However, it is wrong to think that God is like us. God is all-love, all-goodness and all-truth. He has an infinite amount of every positive attribute. This means He never ever runs out of those attributes!

Psalm 119:160

The very essence of your words is truth;
all your just regulations will stand forever.

Numbers 23:19

God is not a man, so he does not lie.
He is not human, so he does not change his mind.
Has he ever spoken and failed to act?
Has he ever promised and not carried it through?

The attributes that God has, He has them flawlessly and without limit. He is infinite. That means, when it comes to truth, He overflows with truth and only tells the truth.

And God has an *infinite* or unlimited amount of any one of His attributes or qualities. Together, all His infinite attributes define His character. He never does or says anything that

is incompatible with, or goes against His character. (This is unlike mankind, who is only an image of God. Mankind bears some of God's attributes but we only have a *finite* amount of each attribute.)

But what does it mean for us to know that God is infinite in all His attributes and cannot violate His character? If we know that God CANNOT lie, that should give us a lot of confidence and assurance in His word! He is absolutely trustworthy!

This is totally different from believing He can lie but chooses not to. If that were the case, how would we know when He is lying and when He is telling the truth? How would we know when we can trust and believe Him? We can't. So understanding what it means that God is different from us and He is infinite does make a difference to how we see and treat God.

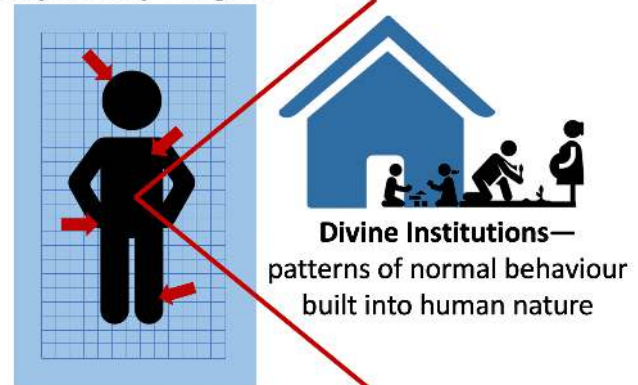
Divine Institutions

God is a God of order. When He designed mankind, He purposefully designed their physical features, their minds, emotions and capacity for relationships. But He did more.

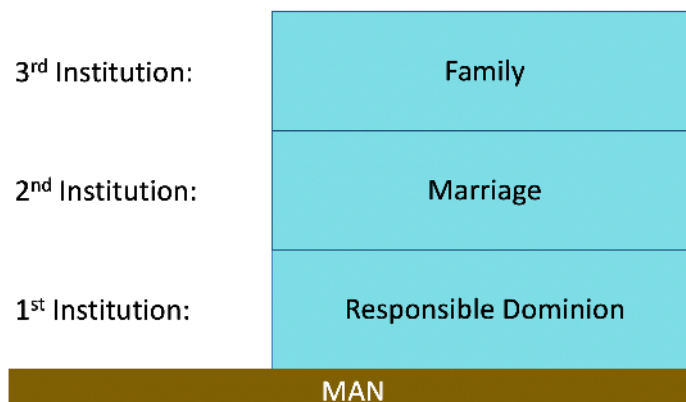
He also built into man's nature the patterns of behaviour to enable them to live well. These patterns of behaviour are the normal way that God intended for people to live. We call these Divine Institutions.

The Divine Institutions of Responsible Dominion, Marriage and Family that God gave man are essential for human society to function well and thrive.

Purposefully Designed



The First Three Divine Institutions



First Divine Institution: Responsible Dominion

The first divine institution that God established was **responsible dominion**. Right from the start, with Adam—the first man—God gave him the job of managing the world that He had created. Man was God’s representative. Man was the under-lord of creation, while Yahweh was the overlord (the Creator-God’s Hebrew name is Yahweh).

Genesis 1:28

Then God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground.”

God as the creator, was the one who owned and ruled over what He had made. But God gave man authority over the world; man was supposed to take care of the world while looking to God for guidance. God was going to rule the world indirectly through man.

Just as God created man in His own image, God also shared with man His work, although to a far smaller degree. What does this mean?

Consider this: the first image we see of God is as a labourer. He is working and creating in the first workweek in history. Similarly, reflecting God’s own image, God assigned man creative labour in the garden of Eden.

Genesis 2:8, 15 [God made a model \(garden\) for man to work in.](#)

⁸ Then the LORD God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there he placed the man he had made. ¹⁵ The LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it. [This is a relational God.](#)

God first placed Adam in the garden that He Himself had already planted. Looking around, Adam could see a model of what God meant to responsibly care for the land. Adam was then given the task of carefully tending the garden that God planted as well as subduing the wilderness outside the garden so that it would no longer be wild, but fruitful and full of resources for living. God didn’t just tell Adam what to do. God modelled it and then told Adam to do the same. God shared with Adam the work of governing over the earth.

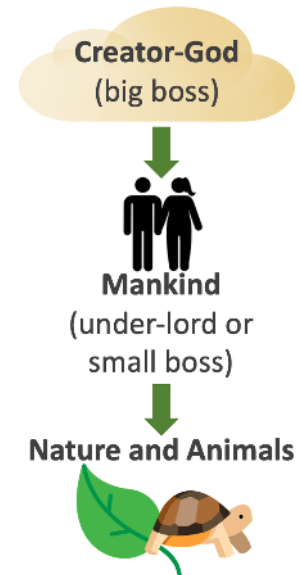
Here is another aspect of God sharing His work with man. During the creation of the world, God started naming what He created. Again, as the creator, He had the authority to name what He had made. The ability to name something demonstrates one’s ownership of that thing.

Genesis 1:5, 10

⁵ God called the light “day” and the darkness “night.”

¹⁰ God called the dry ground “land” and the waters “seas.” And God saw that it was good.

But after that initial naming exercise, God handed the responsibility of naming the creatures to man because he was God’s representative. So Adam’s work also involved naming the creatures that God created.



Genesis 2:19

So the LORD God formed from the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would call them, and the man chose a name for each one.

As God created, He evaluated and took pleasure in His creation.

Genesis 1:31

Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good! And evening passed and morning came, marking the sixth day.

Similarly, mankind was to take pleasure in their work. Work was to be fun and joyful, exciting and meaningful, an articulation of mankind's creativity.

God is the ruler over all. And the role He gave man was to be an under-lord, in charge of creation, working under God.

Psalm 8:1–9

- ¹ O LORD, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth!
Your glory is higher than the heavens.
- ² You have taught children and infants
to tell of your strength,
silencing your enemies
and all who oppose you.
- ³ When I look at the night sky and see the work of your fingers—
the moon and the stars you set in place—
- ⁴ what are mere mortals that you should think about them,
human beings that you should care for them?
- ⁵ Yet you made them only a little lower than God
and crowned them with glory and honor.
- ⁶ You gave them charge of everything you made,
putting all things under their authority—
- ⁷ the flocks and the herds
and all the wild animals,
- ⁸ the birds in the sky, the fish in the sea,
and everything that swims the ocean currents.
- ⁹ O LORD, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth!

King David, who wrote this psalm, recognised man's role as under-lord over all creation. God had placed mankind in charge of everything else He had made. Though man is a created creature, he has been given a special role to rule Yahweh's creation.

Can we understand the world just by looking at nature?

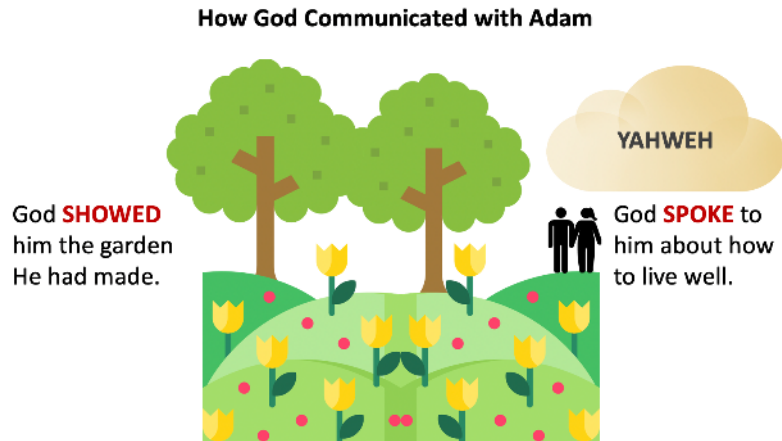
When God created mankind, He did not leave man to live however they wished. As the Creator-God of both creation and man, He knows best how people should live because He designed them. God showed the first man and woman the world He made, and He also told them how to live in it.

Notice how Adam learnt about God. First, he saw and interacted with the world God had created. And then he relied on God's words to teach him about how to live well. For example, God told him which fruit was safe to eat and which was not. God told him that he needed to work and care for the earth.

Adam needed both to experience God's creation and to hear His word before He could understand God and the world.

This was true at the start of mankind and continues to be true today. We need to see or experience God's creation and we need to hear from God directly (through His recorded Scripture) in order to understand Him and know how to live properly.

God's revealed creation and His spoken Word recorded for us work hand in hand.



Is work evil? Is it a curse? Isn't it true that in a perfect world, man should not have to work?

Many people think and feel that work is the source of misery. They believe that in a perfect world, leisure and entertainment should be the main focus. They believe that would be a "good life".

However, this is not how God sees it at all. God Himself is the first person to work. And we know that God is good. God will not do something that is bad or not good. It is not in His character! At the time of creation, we see that not only did God work, He took pleasure in it. We can learn from this that work is good, productive and satisfying.

God wanted to share with mankind the sense of joy, satisfaction and pleasure that comes from accomplishing good work. So when God shared His work with man, that was a good thing!

However, on the flip side, God also sees the lack of productive labour as a bad thing.

Proverbs 18:9

A lazy person is as bad as someone who destroys things.

2 Thessalonians 3:11–12

¹¹ Yet we hear that some of you are living idle lives, refusing to work and meddling in other people's business. ¹² We command such people and urge them in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and work to earn their own living.

Because God made mankind to work, oftentimes people who are not productively engaged in some form of work (whether paid or not) feel a sense of purposelessness and even lostness. And some try to fill in this gap with “replacement” activities: leisure, entertainment and even unhealthy and destructive habits.

Knowing that God made man for joyful work should help us understand ourselves better and also seek out work where we can feel alive in the gifts and talents God gave us.

Some people think of “work” only as paid labour. They think that looking after children and taking care of the household is not “real work”. But this is not how God defined the divine institution of responsible dominion. Adam and Eve didn't work for wages but they were definitely engaged in work! In many passages of Scripture, we see that God views work as taking care of the earth and the family, regardless of whether a person is paid for it or not.

It is the same for men and women today. We were designed for productive and creative work. This includes working to earn a living. But work also includes managing the household and the family, building your own home, performing chores around the house, training the children, volunteering at an organisation, taking care of aged parents, being involved in church ministry and much more. Whatever is productive, and uses our strength and creative energy is work.

Second Divine Institution: Marriage

The second divine institution is **marriage** and it builds upon the first. As God brought all the animals to Adam, he probably examined each one and studied them, maybe even played with them as he decided on their names. During this naming exercise, it would have become clear that none of the animals was like him. In fact, it would have become very clear to Adam that all the animals were in pairs. They all had suitable companions. The bull had the cow, the stallion had the mare, the rooster had the hen and so on. But they were all unlike him. He was alone.



The Bible clearly says “there was not found a helper fit for him”.

Genesis 2:20

The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him.

Why did Adam need a helper? What was a helper supposed to help with? Recall the task that God had given man.

Genesis 1:28

Then God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground.”

First, he was supposed to be the under-lord, the responsible caretaker of nature. So Adam needed a partner to help him responsibly care for what God created. The job was too big for him to accomplish alone.

Second, he was supposed to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. He needed someone to have children with. None of the animals would do. None was like him. He did not have a suitable companion. [God wanted man to realise that he was not complete, that he \(man\) needed a helper.](#)

Genesis 2:18

Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him.” [Helper in Hebrew = "Ezer" = a strong ally; vital and powerful help](#)

God’s definition of a helper that was “just right” for man was a woman. God was very intentional about that. He could have created any other creature for man but He chose woman.

“JUST RIGHT” = Woman



Why? Interestingly, even though man and woman are both made in the image of God and are equal in God’s sight, God designed each of them with some built-in differences. For example, physically, God designed them differently so that together, they could have children. Woman is “just right” for man because only with her can man produce children.

There are also other subtle differences. For example, God designed the man to have an instinct to protect and provide while the woman has a maternal instinct. In the Bible, this maternal instinct is often expressed as a compassionate, comforting presence that is associated with the mother or the female. In fact, when God talks about this aspect of His character, He sometimes uses maternal vocabulary. (See for example, Isaiah 49:15, 66:13; Matthew 23:37.) Both the male and female instincts reflect different aspects of God’s character. His design of woman is “just right” for man because their fixed gender differences mean that man and woman are complementary. Together, they are equipped to provide an environment best suited for their children to grow and thrive.

In God’s design, together as a team, man and woman were to care for the land and have children.

It is important to note that a helper is not a servant or slave. Elsewhere in the Bible, God is called man’s helper many times (for example, Exodus 18:4; Deuteronomy 33:7). In a later lesson (#23), we will explore further how God designed woman to complete man in a way

[Isaiah 66:13](#)

[13 As one whom his mother comforts,
so I will comfort you;
you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.](#)

[Genesis 2:21 Woman was made from man. Both are of the same essence. They are equals.](#)

"ish" = man = husband.

similar to how God used wisdom to complete creation (Proverbs 8:23–31). For now, it is sufficient to know that woman was man's equal and was created to complete him.

As a team, man and woman were to take care of the earth. Caring for the land and population growth were to go hand in hand. As they managed the land and it produced enough food, they could have the number of children the food supply could support. God wanted man to manage the earth and his family in a sustainable, responsible manner. He wanted man to have good stewardship of the earth. God did not ask them to irresponsibly have an unlimited number of children without the ability to support them. It was to be a healthy balance.

Scripture has instruction and encouragement for people to work hard and care for their families. The Holy Spirit even inspired the wisest man on earth, King Solomon, to write the book of Proverbs to give advice on how to live responsibly, live well and care for the family.

For example, he wrote:

Proverbs 27:23–27

- ²³ Know the state of your flocks, *You need to know your resources.*
and put your heart into caring for your herds,
²⁴ for riches don't last forever,
and the crown might not be passed to the next generation.
²⁵ After the hay is harvested and the new crop appears
and the mountain grasses are gathered in,
²⁶ your sheep will provide wool for clothing,
and your goats will provide the price of a field.
²⁷ And you will have enough goats' milk for yourself,
your family, and your servant girls.

King Solomon went on to say that a mother who manages the household well will have children who will call her blessed. (Reading all of Proverbs 31:10–31, we can see the wife is described as a good partner for the husband as they manage the family together.)

Proverbs 31:27–29

- ²⁷ She carefully watches everything in her household
and suffers nothing from laziness.
²⁸ Her children stand and bless her.
Her husband praises her:
²⁹ "There are many virtuous and capable women in the world,
but you surpass them all!"

The institution of marriage is the model that God designed for man and woman. God did not intend for man to do all the work alone. It is too big of a job for one person. God intended marriage to be a partnership between man and woman so both can fulfil their God-assigned task of responsible dominion.

Today, for a variety of reasons, we see many single parents trying to bring up a family on their own. This is extremely challenging. Without the benefit of a partner, supporting a family financially, physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually is very difficult. God's original plan for marriage was a complementary partnership of two equals who would provide mutual help and support to one another.

Third Divine Institution: Family

The third divine institution that God put in place is the **family**. It builds upon the first and second institutions.

Marriage normally leads to caring for nature as a family. The job that was given to man to care for nature, is passed on to the family so future generations could also care for the earth.

In Scripture, it is the family that is the basic unit of society, not individuals. For example, families are the ones that owned property and possessions, not individuals.

The family is also the training ground for children.



Deuteronomy 6:5–9

⁵ And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. ⁶ And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. ⁷ Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. ⁸ Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. ⁹ Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Proverbs 19:18

Discipline your children while there is hope.
Otherwise you will ruin their lives.

Proverbs 22:6

Direct your children onto the right path,
and when they are older, they will not leave it.

Within the family is where members learn the ways of God, authority, love and responsibility. The family is the main instructor, responsible for the children's education, skills development, discipline and preparing the children to function well in society. While families may have help in training their children, they are ultimately accountable for how their children are trained.

A successful society stems from successful families. Families were to be the school, the government, and the unit that loves, nurtures and disciplines children. If each family trained their children in the ways of God, every family would be contributing godly people into society. Society would then work well. In fact, the fruit of the parents' labour could have a positive influence on society not just for one or two generations, but for many generations into the future.

[Deut 21:18 \[How serious is God about good parenting to bring up God fearing children into society\]](#)

18 "Suppose a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey his father or mother, even though they discipline him. 19 In such a case, the father and mother must take the son to the elders as they hold court at the town gate. 20 The parents must say to the elders, 'This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious and refuses to obey. He is a glutton and a drunkard.' 21 Then all the men of his town must stone him to death. In this way, you will purge this evil from among you, and all Israel will hear about it and be afraid.

Is it true that once children become adults and can do whatever they want, parents no longer have the right to speak into their lives?

We see in the Bible that God holds parents accountable for speaking into the lives of their children regardless of whether they are young or full-grown adults with children of their own.

For example, while God gave King David a very good evaluation as king, His commentary was different with regards to David as a father. When David was an old man, one of his sons, Adonijah, decided to make himself king. This is what the Bible said:

1 Kings 1:6

Now his father, King David, had never disciplined him at any time, even by asking, “Why are you doing that?” Adonijah had been born next after Absalom, and he was very handsome.

David had never disciplined Adonijah, nor questioned his son about the choices he was making. The Bible seems to indicate that David allowed his son to do whatever he pleased. God does not condone such poor parenting. Another parent who allowed his children to run wild was Eli the priest. Even though his sons were serving as priests, they didn't believe in God (1 Samuel 2:12) and they made Yahweh very angry when they went against Him. So God told the prophet Samuel who was just a boy at that time, what He would do to Eli.

1 Samuel 3:13

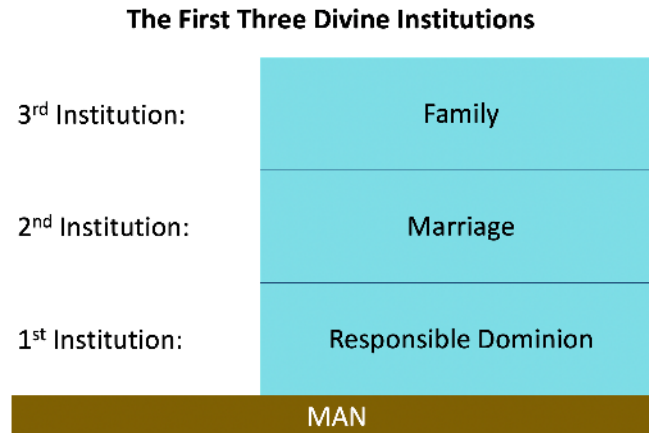
I have warned him that judgment is coming upon his family forever, because his sons are blaspheming God and he hasn't disciplined them.

God judged Eli's family forever because he failed to properly discipline his wayward, adult sons. As God set up the divine institution of family, He meant for families to hold all members accountable for the choices they make and the way they live their lives.

Similarly, parents should view their responsibility as parents very seriously. The Bible does not give an age limit beyond which parents can stop speaking into the lives of their children.

The First Three Divine Institutions Work Together

These three divine institutions are interlocked and work together. Destroying one destroys the other two as well. God issued these institutions so mankind could live well.



Today, in our sin-cursed world, we recognise that people are not able to fulfil God's divine institutions. For example:

- Some are unable to work for a variety of legitimate reasons like health issues.
- There are those who remain single. (For them, the Bible has encouraging advice.) [1 Cor 7](#)
- And there are families where one parent is missing (because of reasons like divorce, death or separation).

Does it mean that the individuals in these situations are defying God's divine institutions? No, not necessarily. We need to remember that the divine institutions were issued to mankind as a whole, rather than to individuals. And they were to help mankind and society as a whole thrive.

However, there are those who openly defy the divine institutions. They take the "divine" out of the institutions and declare that these institutions are man-made and can be redefined to suit their desires. Such open rebellion against God always leads to problems. We will examine this further in Lesson 3.

~~Divine Institutions~~
man-made

Creation Completed

When God was finished with creation it was perfect. Man was designed to live in this perfect world that God in His love, created.

Genesis 1:31–2:1

³¹ Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good! And evening passed and morning came, marking the sixth day.

¹ So the creation of the heavens and the earth and everything in them was completed.

This was the definition of “normal”. This was the “normal” perfect world that God created.

Whatever processes God had used at creation were **turned off** at the end of the sixth day. Though Yahweh continues to exercise His power, He has not repeated the process He used at creation.

Creation



Summary of the Biblical Worldview from the Creation Account

In this overview of origins, we see some very unique things. The biblical worldview can be summarised as this:

Summary of the Biblical Worldview

1. Creator-Creature Distinction
One God | Man | Nature (separate from each other)
2. Personal Sovereign God
3. Ultimate Authority: God

There is a Creator-creature distinction with two levels of being. (1) There is God, an infinite personal creator, and then there is (2) created man and nature.

The sovereign God is a person who relates to what He creates, personally. As the creator, God is the ultimate authority. By His will, everything was created and He has the authority to do with His creation whatever He wills.

As Bible believers, we trust in the complete accuracy of the Bible and we believe in the creation account as it was told to Moses by God himself. God was an “eyewitness” to creation, not man. Mankind was not present, nor can we use any scientific tools to probe backwards in time to the creation week. The processes that God used have been turned off. We therefore cannot observe, test nor collect data from the creation event. We have to rely on the truthful account given to us by the creator Himself.

Examining creation and the divine institutions that God created, we can see that He is purposeful in the way He creates. He demonstrates great attention to detail, a high level of care and concern, and a well-thought-out design for all of creation. The world that God created was perfect in every detail and it worked flawlessly. Though we recognise that this is no longer true, here at the creation event, we can be grateful, humble and appreciative for the love that God shows through the way He created.

Discussion Questions

Discuss the following questions as a group or use them for personal reflection.

1. In your opinion, what is the impact on society when it redefines the divine institutions of marriage and family? What is the impact at the family, community and societal levels?
2. How do you see Christian families handling their divinely-given responsibility to train their children? What is the role of the church or the Christian community in training children?
3. How does your own family operate? How does it compare with the institutions of marriage and family as designed by God?



Pre-reading for next lesson: Genesis 3

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