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BLUEPRINTS: Walls: A Healthy Marriageⁱ Genesis 2:24-25

INTRODUCTION:

Good morning, church family. I want to say a special welcome to those of you that are guests with us today. Thank you for entrusting us with your Sunday. It is our prayer that our church already feels like home to you.

We love to connect with our guests. We would ask you to text the keyword, TBCMP, which stands for Trinity Baptist Church Mt. Pleasant, to the number 94-000. Just follow the instructions from there.

Or you can stop by Guest Connect located in the lobby. We have a team that would like to meet you and give you a gift as a way of saying thank you for being with us this morning. Thanks again for being here today.

SERIES OVERVIEW:

We are in a teaching series we've called Blueprints: Building Families by God's design. We're looking at God's Word as the blueprint. Godly families lead to godly societies. We've looked at the foundation of building our on the rock of God's Word. The importance of power tools, praying parents and grandparents. Today, we're looking at building walls, security of a healthy marriage.

OPENING ILLUSTRATION: Our first fight

22 years ago, this past May, Cathy and I got married. Our wedding day was awesome. I golfed with my buddies, she spent the day with her bridesmaids getting ready. We had a packed house for the ceremony. I bawled like a baby, she looked stunning. We had a blast at the reception. Said our goodbyes to everyone and off we went. We honeymooned in Hawaii. All was perfect. Until we got back home.

I was in seminary and had one semester left before graduation. Cathy had quit her job at Fidelity as a 401k specialist because we determined that living in Ft. Worth meant too far of a drive for her to the office. At the time, I was an intern at First Baptist Coppell making a whopping \$600 a month. Cathy had saved up money from her job, so we were going to be just fine.

Well, when we got back from Hawaii, we were telling all our friends about what all we did in Maui and Oahu. Our friends were about to go on a trip to Hawaii in

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the next few weeks. All of the sudden, Cathy gets a brainstorm. "Hey Chris! Let's use the money I saved up and go back with them!"

Now, that would have taken our entire savings. So, I said, "Uh no. That's a dumb idea." To which that comment started a massive fight. You can imagine. "That's my money." "No, it's now our money." "You're so boring." "You don't have common sense." I'm not saying I was the sharpest tool in the shed. By the way, I'm still not!

All of a sudden, we realized, in that moment, that we each had different expectations about a lot of things in life. She was thinking our marriage would be filled with fun and travel, and I was the more sensible one, stay home and work. Needless to say, we didn't go back to Hawaii! \$600 a month goes so far.

But you know, marriage can be challenging. But it's challenging because two broken people come together with two different expectations. And often those expectations run against each other, and it creates conflict. And in those moments, it's vital to the success of our family to learn how to have an imperfect but healthy marriage.

A healthy marriage is like walls in a home. Walls protect the home from the outside elements. They also provide structure and support inside the home.ⁱⁱ So, this morning, as we look at The Blueprint, God's design for family, my aim is to help us build walls of healthy marriages. And to do that we are going to turn to Genesis, chapter 2. We will focus on 2 verses this morning. We are going to see 4 keys to a healthy marriage. 4 keywords that will help us build structure and support in our pursuit to have a godly family.

MESSAGE:

Let's read together, Genesis, chapter 2. Beginning in verse 18. Follow along in your copy of God's Word. ***18**Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone.* So, at this point in creation, God is creating everything, He's saying, "Good, good, good." Then He creates man and says, "Very good." Then He comes to verse 18 of Genesis 2 and says, "Not good. It's not good for man to be alone." So, God says, ***"I will make him a helper fit for him."*** The word "helper" is a powerful word to use here. It means a completing companion.ⁱⁱⁱ Jesus calls the Holy Spirit our Helper. It doesn't mean less than. In fact, I believe that as God is saying this, He's saying, I want to bless and reveal more of My glory. So, I'm creating marriage to do that. Follow me here.

God exists in triune form, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. And by creating man and woman, and desiring to be the center of marriage, God is creating something that is, in a sense, modeling Himself, the Trinity. So, the real purpose of marriage is to reveal God. That means we get married for 2 reasons: 1) to glorify God, and 2) fulfill His command to build a family. So, all expectations, issues, and challenges aside, your role as a married couple is to glorify God and build a godly family. That's your purpose.

Single people in the room. It is important to understand this now. As you wait for the person God has for you, you need to know and realize that marriage is to be about those two things. Keep that as primary in your view.

Let's keep reading. Verse 19. *19Now out of the ground the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. 20The 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. 21So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. 22And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. 23Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of Man."* Now, I find it interesting that we only have Adam's response. The Bible doesn't mention what Eve said. So, I picture Adam seeing Eve for the first time saying, "Whoa, man!" And then Eve saying, "Oh, man."

Verses 24 and 25, our main focus today. *24Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. 25And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.* Here are 4 keys, 4 words, to a healthy marriage. Let's look at them together.

1) Leave.

Verse 24 begins by saying, *"24Therefore [because of God's institution of marriage] a man shall leave his father and his mother."* The first wall we build in a healthy marriage is leaving. The question is, "What does it mean to leave?"

Well, marriage is often referred to as holy matrimony. And that's for good reason. Marriage is God's union of a man and a woman in a covenant relationship. When Jesus quoted this passage in Matthew 19, He said, "What

God has put together, no man is to separate." So, marriage is holy because God is the one that has joined two together in marriage.

And going back to what we talked about just a moment ago, marriage is holy because it reflects a holy God. It's His invention. That means, your marriage, all marriages, are extremely holy. And we are to treat marriage as holy.

So, when a man, and a woman, come together in marriage, they are to leave their father and mother, so that they can create a sacred space.^{iv} Marriage is the creation of a new union, of husband and wife. It is the severing of one relationship to solidify another.^v Marriage is a sacred union requiring sacred space. Space that can only be created by leaving our parents.

The idea of leaving is a matter of priority. Leaving is physical, but it is also emotional. It is putting your new marriage relationship ahead of all other relationships. It is God's design that you no longer depend upon your parents, but in the context of a new and sacred space you build your home, you learn to depend on one another. You create a new first loyalty.

Now, leaving does not negate the 5th Commandment. We are to honor our father and mother, always. But the formation of a new union in marriage does create new boundaries. A healthy marriage is supported by walls of leaving.

Parents that have married kids, your role is to help your kids create their sacred space by allowing them to leave. For their benefit, don't crowd this sacred space. Point them toward dependence on one another. It is not your job to build their home. That is why at the traditional unity candle lighting the candles that the parents light are blown out. A new first loyalty is created.

ILLUSTRATION: Cathy's Mom – pointing her back to me

I think I've mentioned this before, but I'm grateful for my in-laws. When Cathy and I first got married, like I mentioned earlier, there were a lot of changes and learning one another. Those of you that are married, you know what I'm talking about. And believe it or not, there were some things I did that irritated Cathy. I know that's hard to believe. She would call her mom and say, "Do you know what Chris does?" And she would start in on all the things that irritated her. And my mother-in-law would say, "Sounds like you need to talk to your husband about that." In other words, "You have left home, and you are building a new home. You no longer need to depend on me, you need to figure it out with your

husband.” That is the leaving principle that God is talking about here in Genesis 2.

You know what else leaving entails? Leaving includes leaving past relationships. We prioritize our marriage by forsaking other relationships. That means that we don’t look back and wonder what if. And we don’t look around and compare our marriage to the social media posts of other couples. That only leads us to wonder what that is out there might be better. We don’t go hang out with our friends all the time. No, we leave all other relationships and prioritize our own marriage. Leaving means your marriage is to be your top priority.

I would go a step further and say whatever else you do in life, your career, raising kids, taking care of your health, none of those things compare to the first commitment of your marriage.

Let me mention a practical application here in terms of social media use. Don’t creep on the social media accounts of past relationships. You don’t need to allow your mind to go there. I came across a study that shows, “That increased usage of social media has had a negative effect on marriages and relationships. Higher levels of social media usage have led to more marital problems, infidelity, conflicts, jealousy, and eventually divorce.”^{vi} Isn’t it interesting that those things can all be tied to social media. That’s because that has become an easy way to hold onto other relationships when we need to leave them.

So, the first key to a healthy marriage is to leave. Number two, ...

2) Cleave.

Genesis 2:24 continues by saying, “*24Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife.*” The word translated “hold fast to” here is translated “cleave” in the King James Version.

The idea of cleaving is a commitment of permanence.^{vii} The literal translation of the word is “to cling, keep close, grip.”^{viii} A better translation would be to be welded together. I kind of like that. Generally, when you weld two materials together, you do so by making use of a third component as a bonding agent. When it comes to marriage The Lord God is to be central and The Holy Spirit is our bonding agent.

And another truth about cleaving is that you can’t cleave unless you leave. You can’t fully grasp 2 things at one time. It loosens your grip on both.

ILLUSTRATION: JB Weld in Bathroom Renovation

When we were selling our house in Gilmer to move here to Mt. Pleasant, we had to complete a renovation of our master bathroom. Wanting to save money, I thought I could do it myself. And with the help of others, it turned out good.

But when I was tiling around the shampoo box, you know the shower insert where you place all the items. When I was tiling around that, I didn’t leave room for the border pieces. So, what I did is bought some JB Weld Water Weld glue and used it to glue the border pieces to the tile itself. It worked great!

I’m just curious, how many of you have used JB Weld? Okay, so those of you that have, you know that it actually comes in two tubes. You squeeze out a little of both tubes and then mix them together. A chemical reaction takes places and man it because super sticky. It welds two things together.

Well, when we cleave to our spouses, we do so by leaving and working together to stick like glue. That is the intent.

To cleave to your spouse means that, “In all the world, I am honoring and committed to you.”^{ix} This means that we are committed to sticking it out, no matter what. Our frustrations, our failures, our faults, and our frailties, we are in it together. When Cathy gets frustrated with me, I try to bring levity to the situation and I usually say something like, “Aren’t you glad you’re stuck with me?!” She usually rolls her eyes.

But you know, it is this principle of cleaving that often challenges popular opinion today. I have heard people say, “What’s the big deal about being legally married? What’s a piece of paper anyway?” Have you ever heard that? Well, let me share with you why I believe in legal marriage. How can we say, on one hand, that we are committed to you but also say, on the other, I’m not wanting to be committed legally. Isn’t that a contradiction? That is taking God’s blueprint and adding a back door, a way out.^x I understand that marriage isn’t just a legal binding contract. It’s much more than that. It’s a covenant. But my point is that you cannot experience the joy of ultimate connection apart from total commitment to one another. We need to eliminate the back door from marriage.

Again, I've told you in every message in this series so far, I want these messages to be laced with grace. So, I want to lovingly tell you, if you are just living together and not legally married, you will never experience the blessing of holding fast to one another, being glued together. So, here's my commitment to you. If that's you, no judgment. I want to come alongside you and start walking you toward legal marriage. I want for you to experience God's blessing. It's going to take some work. But email me at info@trinitytx.org and just say, "Pastor Chris, we want to set up a time to visit about getting married." I'll reach out to you and set up a time where we can talk through what that looks like.

Two keys to a healthy marriage, leave and cleave. Third key is...

3) Weave.

Verse 24. ***24Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.*** The becoming one flesh is the weaving of two lives together into one. It is the idea of oneness.^{xi} This is probably the most vital key to a healthy marriage. And notice how this takes lots of work. Verse 24 says they shall become, meaning a process of becoming one flesh.

See, when you leave your family of origin, and you get married, you bring with you all kinds of differences into the new family you are creating. And in your family of origin, what was so normal is now oh so strange to the other person you are married to. And phrases like, "Why in the world do you do that?!" are said often.

Then take the natural differences between men and women and with the differences of your family of origin and we have a climate ripe for disaster. In some ways Cathy and I are similar. But in a lot of ways we are polar opposites. She wants to backpack across Europe. I want to stay here in the good ole USA. She likes the show, *Amazing Race*. I like football. She likes sushi and I like steak. Can anyone else relate?

So, how do you overcome all the differences? Well, you have to work at becoming one flesh. We are to embrace oneness. We weave our lives together through the one flesh principle. We aim for oneness.

But too many times, just like two bodies of water coming together create turbulence, marriages experience choppy waters because they are trying to

aim for sameness, not oneness. Sameness is the pursuit to change the other person to be just like you. To say, "I'm going to change what you like to do for a hobby. I'm going to tweak your personality. I wanna change this and take that and do this and then, when you're just like me, we will be good."

But oneness differs from sameness. It's where stop emphasizing all our differences, and we instead celebrate them. Listen, if you are a spender and your spouse is a saver, praise The Lord! Because spender, you need to be reined in. And saver, you need to relax and have a little fun. Praise The Lord you have someone to balance you out. Do you see how oneness works?

Listen, God is a master at taking polar opposites and weaving them together, unifying them. Just look at the early church. You had a bunch of Jews and Gentiles, who hated one another, get saved and start going to church together. There were divisions and factions, and errant theologies. But when The Holy Spirit guided those early believers, they were united on a much deeper level and look at the church today. Made up of every people and tongue, nation and tribe, into one family of God.

The way you weave your lives together is not by changing the other person to be just like you. That will only lead to frustration and turmoil. Instead seek to be unified, even in the midst of your differences. And to accomplish that, you will need to lean on the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

So, the keys are to leave, cleave and weave. The final key to a healthy marriage is to...

4) Receive.

Verse 25. ***25And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.*** The idea of nakedness is far more than a lack of clothes. It is the sense of being open, exposed and vulnerable. This verse is communicating the incredible level of intimacy Adam and Eve experienced. When we leave, and we cleave, and we weave, we receive and experience an intimacy that God intended way back in the Garden of Eden, His original design for marriage.

Nakedness is many times associated with shame, humiliation and guilt in the Bible. But in verse 25 we see the opposite. There was no shame. They lived in perfect intimacy before God and one another.

So, in reality, this key is more of a reward than it is a key. True intimacy and oneness are God's reward for building marriage according to His design. Isn't that what we all truly desire? To be known fully and loved completely. To have a marriage where our spouse sees the good, the bad, the ugly, yet we are still loved. That is the way God designed marriage to be. Leave, cleave, weave, and then receive.

Now, let me just briefly mention a motivation for building your marriage God's way. Whether you realize it or not, you are discipling your kids when it comes to marriage. They are picking up cues from you about what marriage looks like. And to build a healthy society, we have to have healthy families. And to have healthy families means we must work toward healthy marriages. Not perfect, but healthy, you understand. The hard work that goes into aligning your marriage according to God's design is good work, worthy work, and impactful work. Work that an enemy would seek to thwart. But I urge us to prioritize and commit to working on our marriage.

CONCLUSION:

Listen, to be honest, we don't need another resource on the keys to a healthy marriage. I know that undermines my entire message this morning. But the truth is there is so much information about marriage and family available to us. Hear me, I'm grateful for those Christian resources by incredible pastors, counselors, and authors. In fact, I got to write an endorsement for a book entitled, "Love Handles: Opening the Door to Marital Intimacy." It was written by a friend of mine, Joe Stewart, a pastor I served on church staff under. I would encourage you to pick it up on Amazon. It's an easy read and very practical. But my point is that there are a ton of resources on marriage and family out there. And we don't need more information, we need transformation. And that transformation comes by way of a vibrant, personal relationship with Jesus.

If you're here today and you have never surrendered your life to Christ, you need to know that the path to a healthy marriage and family begins there. Salvation. Acknowledging that you are a sinner, but that Jesus, God's Son, lived and perfect life and became our atoning sacrifice on the cross. That He was buried, but on the third day, He resurrected. And by so doing, He defeated sin, death, and the grave. Have you been born again unto a relationship with Jesus Christ? If not, I urge you to come and take the hand of one of our elders following this service and simply say, "I need Jesus." We would love to visit with you about how to trust Jesus as Lord today.

For those of you that are already believers, your path to a healthy marriage and family begins with surrender to Jesus. You need to cease striving and be led by the Holy Spirit of God. You might resonate with the truth that many of us are trying to navigate our marriage and family in our own strength and if we're honest, we are failing. That's because what is needed is divine guidance, not human wisdom. A healthy marriage is not what you know, it's Who you know and depend on.

I'm going to pray, and we are going to sing a song of reflection. You respond to the prompting of The Lord on your heart. [PRAY]

ENDNOTES:

ⁱ Works consulted in preparation for this message: David Guzik, Enduring Word Commentary, “Creation Completed; Adam in the Garden of Eden,” published by Enduring Word, accessed online: <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/genesis-2/>; Jerry Pipes, “Building A Successful Family: Basic Building Blocks for A Healthy Home,” Pipes: Lawrenceville, 2002; Erwin Lutzer, “What Marriage Is, And Isn’t,” published by The Moody Church, May 26, 2013, accessed online: <https://www.moodymedia.org/sermons/fighting-your-family/what-marriage-and-isnt/>; Jack Graham, “Marriage God’s Way,” published by Prestonwood Baptist Church, April 2024, accessed online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zgnuhSvy4Ts>; Grant Stenzel, “The Five Pillars of a Healthy Christian Marriage,” article published by Stenzel Clinical Services, accessed online: <https://stenzelclinical.com/the-five-pillars-of-a-healthy-marriage/>; John MacArthur, “Marriage As It Was Meant to Be,” sermon published by Grace to You, July 28, 2009, accessed online: <https://www.gty.org/library/articles/A203/marriage-as-it-was-meant-to-be>; Chip Ingram, “God’s Dream For Your Marriage,” published by Living On The Edge Ministries, accessed online: <https://livingontheedge.org/broadcast-series/experiencing-gods-dream-for-your-marriage/?srsltid=AfmBOopG555O9-FfeDweARn4i-lrYURq21zRik6ZQtaKPZlCoDbisfrU>; Skip Heitzig, “Smart Home: Till Death Do Us Part: What You Need to Know to Make Marriage Last,” sermon preached at Calvary Albuquerque, September 9, 2018, accessed online: <https://calvarynm.church/connectwithskip/teachings/#/series/30/sermon/265>; Greg Laurie, “How to Have a Blessed and Successful Marriage,” published by Pastor Greg Laurie, accessed online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XVvNJWegAMI>; Jonathan Mast, “Sex, Dating, & Marriage: The Secret to a Successful Marriage,” published by Hillside Christian Church, August 28, 2022, accessed online: <https://hillsideonline.com/messages/sex-dating-and-marriage/the-secret-to-a-successful-marriage>.

ⁱⁱ Pipes, page 23.

ⁱⁱⁱ Enduring Word Commentary.

^{iv} Idea taken from Erwin Lutzer.

^v Heitzig.

^{vi} “Effects of Social Media Use (and Misuse) on Marriages & Relationships,” published by McKinley Irvin Family Law Firm, accessed online: <https://www.mckinleyirvin.com/resources/digital-divorce-a-guide-for-social-media-digital/how-social-media-affects-marriage/>.

^{vii} Graham.

^{viii} Strong’s Concordance, 1692, dabaq.

^{ix} Lutzer.

^x Analogy borrowed from Skip Heitzig.

^{xi} This point is developed from Jonathan Mast.