



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

# “The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 46”

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***Informed. Insightful. Intelligent.***



### The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 46

#### Ruth 4:10

**10 Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have acquired as my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from his position at the gate. You are witnesses this day.”**

We attend Church to obtain the mind of Christ, meaning, to have the Bible illuminated in our minds so that we can clearly understand the principles that Jesus taught and base our daily personal decisions on those principles.

We come to Church because we want to be obedient to the Bible, which is the doctrine of Jesus Christ, in an informed, insightful and intelligent manner.

Our takeaway point in this series on the Biblical Design of Gender is that God has designed man as the cooperative coalition of husband and wife so that man can successfully achieve the objective that God has given us to exercise dominion over the earth, developing wisdom and knowledge in preparation for further responsibility in our eternal life.

Here is a short background of the book of Ruth. Elimelech, a Jewish farmer living in Bethlehem, moved his wife Naomi and their two sons to the land of Moab during a famine. While the family was in Moab, the sons grew to maturity and then Elimelech died. His sons then married Moabite women. Ten years later, both sons died, and their mother Naomi was left without a husband or sons, but with her two daughters-in-law.

At this point, Naomi decided to return home to her family in Bethlehem. She told her two daughters-in-law that they would have better chances finding a husband among their relatives in Moab, and one of them agreed with her and stayed in Moab. The other, Ruth, had developed faith in God, and accompanied her mother-in-law to Israel to nurture her growing relationship with God.

So Naomi returned to Bethlehem penniless and depressed. Ruth accompanied Naomi, and the sad story of the return of the two of them was a source of conversation for the women of the town.

Ruth decided to take up the trade by which the Lord made provisions for widows. **Leviticus 23:22 and Deuteronomy 24:21** tells Israelite farmers: **22 ‘When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field when you reap, nor shall you gather any gleaning from your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger: I am the LORD your God.’ ”**

**21 When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not glean it afterward; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.**

So, Ruth asked Naomi for permission to glean, to follow the harvesters



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gathering grain in the field so that she could pick up their leavings. Naomi gave Ruth permission, and then God providentially steered Ruth to the farm of Boaz, who was a relative of Elimelech. Ruth began gleaning in the field in the morning, and then, as lunchtime approached, Boaz came to his field to oversee his operation.

Boaz noticed Ruth and asked about her, and was informed that Ruth was the widow of Naomi's son. Boaz was related to Elimelech, Naomi's deceased husband, and so Boaz decided to look after Ruth and Naomi by instructing the harvesters to intentionally leave grain available for Ruth to pick up, rather than making her rummage through the leavings.

Because of Boaz's instructions and Ruth's hard work, Ruth was able to bring home about ten times the normal amount of grain that a gleaner would be able to gather. When Naomi saw the amount that Ruth brought home, she recognized that Ruth's gleaning was extraordinary. When Ruth told Naomi that Boaz was her benefactor, Naomi told Ruth that they were related, and concurred with Boaz's instructions to Ruth to stay in Boaz's field so that Ruth could gather as much as possible.

At the conclusion of the harvest, Naomi considered that Ruth would be more secure if she applied for a Levirate marriage with Boaz, as **Deuteronomy 25:5-6** instructed the Israelites:

**5 "If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be married to a stranger outside the [husband's] family; her husband's brother shall go in to her, take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her.**

**6 And it shall be that the firstborn son which she bears will succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel.**

So, at the instruction of Naomi, Ruth asked Boaz for a Levirate marriage.

Boaz was impressed with Ruth because she showed herself to be hard working, as she both gathered and threshed the grain that Boaz made available to her by herself, without the benefit of the servants and the animals that Boaz used to separate the grain from the stalks. Ruth spent her time between working in the field and taking care of her mother-in-law, which was fitting for a younger widow living with and taking care of an older widow, and which showed her faithful nature. And Boaz found Ruth attractive from the first time he saw her.

But the marriage that Ruth was proposing was not based upon romance, but rather based upon **Deuteronomy 25:5-6**, the Law of God that commanded Israel to maintain the integrity of the land allocation of the tribes of Israel. As the widow of a man that had a geographic inheritance of land in Israel, the only appropriate partner for Ruth was a member of her husband's family, one that would keep the land in the family and provide an heir for her deceased father-in-law Elimelech and her deceased husband Marlon, keeping their land inheritances intact.



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So although Boaz was emotionally and physically attracted to Ruth, objectively, he could not agree to marry Ruth. **Ruth 3:12–13** records that, in response to her marriage request, Boaz told Ruth:

**12 Now it is true that I am a close relative; however, there is a relative closer than I.**

**13 Stay this night, and in the morning it shall be that if he will perform the duty of a close relative for you—good; let him do it. But if he does not want to perform the duty for you, then I will perform the duty for you, as the LORD lives! Lie down until morning.”**

The story of Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare is a popular story in English literature. Romeo and Juliet are young lovers whose families do not approve of one another or of the proposed union of their children. When neither Romeo nor Juliet were able to persuade their parents to bless a marriage between them, Romeo and Juliet killed themselves rather than assent to their parents command to not marry.

On any logical or rational level, the story of Romeo and Juliet would be seen as the foolishness that it is. It is clear to any thinking person that there had to have been any number of suitable spouses available for both Romeo and Juliet that would have met the approval of their families and allowed them to have a long and happy marriage.

However, in the emotional processing of irrational, self-centered and romantic minds, this story is viewed as the epitome of devotion, and has caused many immature and idealistic young people to emulate the example of Romeo and Juliet; if not to commit suicide for “love”, at least to find it romantic to attach themselves to a partner that their family finds inappropriate.

From a Scriptural perspective, it is obvious that a story that applauds suicide as a solution with which we should sympathize is not from God. Jesus tells us, in **John 10:10**:

**10 The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.**

Suicide is not from God. However, the immature find the inappropriate irresistible.

Boaz was not immature and neither was Ruth. They were attracted to one other, but Boaz made it clear that he was only interested in marriage if, objectively, he was the appropriate person for the job. Their emotional connection made Boaz anxious to find out the answer to the question of the appropriateness of their relationship, but had the nearer kinsman decided to marry Ruth, neither Boaz nor Ruth had plans to do anything as rash as commit suicide.

My point is that it is imperative that we develop, in young people, in young men but especially in young women, the understanding that it is inappropriate to



allow feelings, however romantic they may be, to motivate us to deviate from that which we know is the objective design of God for the interaction of the genders. Let me give you an example of that which I mean.

God tells us, in the “a” clause of **2Corinthians 6:14**:

**14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.**

This lesson means that those who are believers in Christ ought not marry those that are not. But, many young people can't see the logic in this commandment. They may have a strong emotional attraction to a young person of no religion or of another religion, i.e. Jewish, Buddhist or Muslim, and this attraction causes them to compromise their allegiance to Christianity. They rationalize that since church, synagogue, temple or mosque only meets for a few hours per week, they and their beloved of another religion can enjoy one another's company except for those few hours, during which time they each can worship individually, make their devotions and then return to their common domicile, each having separately fulfilled their individual religious duty.

And that is correct.

A Christian, theoretically, could be married to a Jew and they could walk through life arm in arm madly in love, except for those few hours per week, which would be less time than they are apart while the husband is at work. It is entirely possible and entirely feasible for a husband and wife to live a religiously bifurcated life with no problem.

So why does **2Corinthians 6:14** admonish Christians to not do this? What is the problem?

One simple question that should explain God's motivation, and that is, “What are you going to do about religion when the children come?”

God, explaining the reason for marriage, tells us in the “a” and “b” portion of **Malachi 2:15**:

**15 But did [God] not make [husband and wife] one, having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring.**

God also tells us, in the “a” clause of **Genesis 1:28**:

**28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply;**

A second purpose of marriage, along with relieving the man's loneliness, is to bring children into the world to increase the population. And if Malachi is to be believed, God wants these children to be Godly offspring. Thus, the religion of the parents becomes an issue when the children have to be taught about God.

In the house of a Christian, Jesus Christ is Lord. In the house of a Jew, Jesus Christ is not the Lord, but a troublesome Galilean carpenter.

When the Christian spouse tells their child about Jesus Christ, and the child goes to their other parent to get their perspective, the child is going to experience a disconnect. “Well”, his or her other parent will say, “that which your other parent is telling you is not entirely accurate. Jesus was never the Christ, but was a deceiver that spoke against the things of God. The Jewish Sanhedrin



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convinced the Roman governor to crucify Jesus, but after he was buried, his disciples stole the body from the tomb and started the myth that he had risen from the dead. But it's actually all a myth.

One parent assures the child of the truth of the Resurrection, while the other parent tells the child that the situation is a function of grave robbers and liars.

What is the child to believe?

Unmarried young people in love generally don't think about these ramifications. The religious upbringing of future children is not a point of intense interest for a dating couple until they marry and the wife in the marriage actually becomes pregnant.

But God, who knows the end from the beginning, has considered this situation as well as all of the other situations that we may have to face in our marriages that we may not anticipate as young lovers. When we say our wedding vows, we say "for better or for worse", and the reason that we say "for worse" is that the "for worse" part is coming. But we have no idea, specifically, of that which the "for worse" is going to be, thus we cannot anticipate the "for worse" part. However, the way that we can fortify ourselves to endure the "for worse" is to follow the objective admonitions in the Word of God when selecting a spouse, because God's rules take everything that will happen into account.

And, it is imperative that we develop, in our young people, in our young men but especially in our young women, the understanding that it is inappropriate to allow feelings, however romantic, to motivate us to deviate from that which we know is the objective design of God for the interaction of the genders. Why especially young women? Young women, by the design of their endocrine systems, have higher concentrations of the hormone oxytocin, which makes young women more emotionally bonded and less objective than young men. Thus, young women have a more difficult time making objective decisions than young men, and are more likely to act inappropriately on their subjective romantic feelings of bondedness.

In early Biblical episodes, women did not make marital decisions. Abraham sent his servant to find a wife for Isaac, who was so impressed by Rebekah's presentation that he decided that Rebekah should be Isaac's wife. Nevertheless, the servant did not approach Rebekah with his proposition, but rather Rebekah's father.

When Jacob found Rachel so desirable that he wanted to marry her, Jacob did not approach Rachel directly, but rather received permission from her father Laban, who made marrying Leah a condition to marrying Rachel. Moses did not court his wife, but rather received his wife from his employer, the priest of Midian. Even in the case that we are studying, Ruth cannot contract marriage directly with Boaz; Boaz has to negotiate with the nearest kinsman.



However, in our generation, young women make marital decisions on their own, in some cases without consulting their fathers. But once a young woman has the type of contact with a young man that causes her to form the emotional bond that we term as “love”, her objectivity about the young man’s appropriateness is compromised. The young woman’s emotional bond with the young man tends to blind her to inappropriateness in their relationship, and she loses her ability to evaluate her young man objectively. She may agree to marry an attractive young man of another religion, and the problem of the religion of the children that we have discussed ensues. And once the marriage is consummated, all such questions, religion included, are generally not decided in her favor.

Why? **Ephesians 5:22** tells us:

**22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.**

Since the husband is the head of the wife, he gets to make the decisions. The woman’s desires about these disputations are generally overruled because the husband is the head of the wife. And it generally does not take long for a woman in this situation to become resentful and less cooperative with her husband, which will diminish her desire and her ability to help her husband and comfort him in his loneliness.

Since a man’s motivation for marriage is to obtain the comfort of a woman, a woman that does not comfort her husband is worthless as a wife, because she does not fulfill the primary function of the role of wife. Thus, the devil has the opportunity to sow discord in our marriages.

The commandment for wives to submit to their husbands is an objective imperative, an absolute commandment from God, as clear and unequivocal as “Thou shalt not steal”. The quoted passage of Scripture goes on to tell us, in **Ephesians 5:23–24**:

**23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.**

**24 Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.**

The authority of the husband over the wife is analogous to that of Christ over the church. And Christ’s authority over the church is absolute.

Since, a husband has absolute authority over his wife, but a wife that is constantly overruled will become resentful and less cooperative with her husband, which will diminish her desire to perform her assigned role, lead the marriage to dysfunction and dissolve the marriage into divorce, what is God’s solution to this situation? In the first six words of the “a” clause of **2Corinthians 6:14**, the Bible says:

**14 Do not be unequally yoked together.**

Since wives are commanded to do that which their husbands tell them to do, the Scripture says that husband and wife should be equally yoked, meaning



that the husband's philosophy of life should be as similar to that of the wife as possible. If the husband and wife are equally yoked, the outcome of their decision making processes will be similar, and the wife will find submission to that which her husband commands her to do less onerous.

The more similar the husband and wife's life philosophies are, the more often they will make the same decision, and the husband won't have to command the wife, because his wife will agree with him. Now, it is true that the husband and wife will have gender differences, but gender differences are part of the design, as they make it possible for husband and wife to have divisions of labor in the marriage, in which each partner can have a dominant venue in the marriage, and each partner can each run their own part of the organization for the mutual benefit of the entire enterprise. Using a football metaphor, the husband is the head coach and the offensive coordinator, and the wife is the defensive coordinator. But they are on the same team.

**2Corinthians 6:14** tells us that if husband and wife share a common religion, then the problem of how the religious upbringing of the children will be handled no longer exists. The more similar the philosophy of life between husband and wife, the easier it will be for husband and wife to coexist. But a marriage based upon emotional attachment or physical attraction does not take any of this thinking and decision making into account.

Romeo and Juliet were madly in love and desirous of one another on an emotional and physical level, but had they actually married, they would have had a fight every holiday as they tried to decide whose mother they were going to visit. Romeo and Juliet initially found one another sexually breathtaking, but their desire for one another would have quickly decreased once they found out that, because of their completely different upbringing, they had completely different perspectives on the way that a household should be run. Even had they not committed suicide, I figure that they would have divorced one another within seven years after the emotional and sexual "thrill" was gone and they found their differences too great to overcome.

So, although we find people with opposite philosophies attractive and interesting, marriage works best when the two people involved share similar philosophies. The more a husband and wife share a philosophical viewpoint, the easier it is for them to develop a state of equilibrium. Boaz and Ruth had similar philosophical positions, and had complementary strengths that would allow them to develop a division of labor. Boaz's strengths were in management and Ruth was a diligent, dedicated worker, thus the roles at which they were most proficient complemented one another. So, after agreeing to explore the objective realities of their relationship, Boaz gave Ruth a great gift of grain, sent her home to work on it, and, as the manager he was, began managing the situation. Boaz started the process by calling a meeting. **Ruth 4:1-4** tells us:





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**1** Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there; and behold, the close relative of whom Boaz had spoken came by. So Boaz said, “Come aside, friend, sit down here.” So he came aside and sat down.

**2** And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, “Sit down here.” So they sat down.

**3** Then he said to the close relative, “Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, sold the piece of land which belonged to our brother Elimelech.

**4** And I thought to inform you, saying, ‘Buy it back in the presence of the inhabitants and the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, redeem it; but if you will not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know; for there is no one but you to redeem it, and I am next after you.’ ” And [the close relative] said, “I will redeem it.”

Since Elimelech had no living sons, the near relative considered that acquiring Elimelech’s estate would increase his own, so he agreed to do so. Elimelech’s wife was past the age of childbearing, thus there would be no need for the near relative to perform the duty of a husband’s brother and impregnate her, because Elimelech’s widow couldn’t get pregnant. But once the close relative agreed to redeem the estate, Boaz told him the rest of the story. **Ruth 4:5** records:

**5** Then Boaz said, “On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also buy it from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance.”

The land that the near relative was acquiring would ultimately not be an addition to his own inheritance, but only a temporary purchase. The land would belong to the son with whom the near relative impregnated Ruth, and once the son was grown, he could take the land from the near relative, because his father, for purposes of inheritance, would be Ruth’s original husband Mahlon.

Thus, in return for a temporary lease on a piece of land, the near relative would become responsible for two women, Ruth, whom he would have to impregnate, although the son would not be his, and Naomi whom he would have to support. The near relative considered and, as **Ruth 4:6** records:

**6** And the close relative said, “I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I ruin my own inheritance. You redeem my right of redemption for yourself, for I cannot redeem it.”

Which was exactly the outcome for which Boaz hoped. He responded, in **Ruth 4:9–11**:

**9** And Boaz said to the elders and all the people, “You are witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech’s, and all that was Chilion’s and Mahlon’s, from the hand of Naomi.

**10** Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have acquired as my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance, that



the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from his position at the gate. You are witnesses this day.”

**11 And all the people who were at the gate, and the elders, said, “We are witnesses. The LORD make the woman who is coming to your house like Rachel and Leah, the two who built the house of Israel; and may you prosper in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem.**

And Boaz performed the duty of a near relative to Ruth, and fathered a son by her whose name was Obed. **Ruth 4:21–22** tells us:

**21 Salmon begot Boaz, and Boaz begot Obed;**

**22 Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David.**

David, of course, was the great King of Israel, the one that slew the giant Goliath, the sweet singer of Israel that authored many of the Psalms. David was the pivotal King of Israel, the one through whom the line of Kings came, culminating with the King of Kings, Jesus Christ. **Jeremiah 23:5–6** prophecies: **5 “Behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD, “That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.**

**6 In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

And this King is Jesus Christ. In the genealogy of Jesus Christ given by Matthew, the David the King is mentioned along with Abraham, the father of the faithful, as **Matthew 1:1** tells us:

**1 The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:**

So, the earthly line of the Lord was the result of the Levirate marriage of Ruth and Boaz, which is one of the reasons that this episode is recorded in the Scriptures.

And the relationship between Boaz and Ruth is analogous to the relationship between the Church and Christ, in that Christ is our Redeemer, just as Boaz was Ruth’s redeemer, and we are His chosen people, just as Boaz chose Ruth.

Jesus chose us although we are not the people of the promise that God made to Israel, the chosen seed of Abraham, as were the Jews, but we are foreigners, like Ruth, who came into the family seeking the mercy and the grace of the Lord.

And **John 3:16–17** tells us:

**16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.**

**17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.**

God sent His Son, not for the people of the promise, but for whomever. Jesus Christ did not come just to save those of His physical family through



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Abraham and David. Jesus came to save the Ruth's of the world, those that rejected their worldly heritage in order to seek after the things of God.

We live in a world that rejects God on every hand. Idolatry of every kind exists in our world. Currently, many worship on the atheistic alter of the self. The world wishes to displace God so that we can worship ourselves, and rejects God's objective wisdom in order that we might have that which we want temporarily and subjectively. Even some that call themselves Christians nominally reject the laws, the wisdom and the direction that God gives us.

But it really doesn't matter how many people in the society believe in God and trust in His Son, because God exists whether or not we choose to believe in Him, and His Son still exists in the form in which He has chosen to reveal Himself to us. The laws, wisdom and admonition in the Bible are objectively true, whether or not we choose to credit them. We will find that if we love God and keep His commandments, His Wisdom, which He bestows upon us in His Word, will allow us understand that it is inappropriate to allow feelings, however romantic they may be, to motivate us to deviate from that which we know is the objective design of God.

Jesus tells us, in **John 13:34–35**:

**34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.**

**35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”**

And this love of which Jesus speaks can be most clearly demonstrated to others in our most intimate of relationships, in our marriages. The marital relationship is the foundational relationship in life; it is the first relationship discussed in Genesis and the last relationship discussed in the book of Revelation. Even so, true success in marriage does not come until the end of our marital relationships, as God's objective for marriage is that we maintain our relationship with one another, even as we promise in our vows, until death does us part.

Resurrection comes after death, not before, and Jesus tells us that the job of loving one another does not just call for a verbal commitment, but that it actually calls for us to follow through to the end, as Jesus did on the Cross of Calvary. He tells us, in **Revelation 2:10**:

**10 Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.**

And Jesus admonishes us that we ought not fail. Trials and tribulations are the “for worse” part of our marriages, as the devil, our adversary, is going to and fro like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour by endeavoring to break up the oneness of our relationships. The devil is the one that is sowing discord



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among us, and trying to incite us to focus on the faults of our spouses rather than those qualities that we love about them.

But there is only one antidote to the poison that the devil tries to put into our marital system, and that is that we love one another as Jesus loves us. Jesus does not focus on our faults or our foibles, but rather on forgiveness and repentance. He saved a woman taken in the act of adultery, and then, in **John 8:10–11**:

**10 When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, “Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?”**

**11 She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said to her, “Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.”**

Jesus told the woman to put the sins of the past in the past and move on to a better day. There is therefore no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk, not after the flesh but after the Spirit. So let us not condemn one another, but let us walk according to the love that the Spirit bestows upon us, and let us love one another, even as the Lord as loved us.

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