

How You Can Avoid Unnecessary Pain in Your Marriage

Allow me to take you through a journey to a time at the beginning of the world. I want to show you a lesson from that time that you can use for your marriage.

Take a moment and consider how many different types of birds, livestock and mammals existed in the Garden of Eden. We know many have gone extinct for one reason or another, so when you think of them, imagine even more animals (you might be able to Google lists of the many birds and animals that are known to have existed).

Even if all you had to do was read such a list, it would take you a pretty long time. Now, imagine how long it would take for every one of those animals to walk up to you, be evaluated by you (maybe have them do something or demonstrate a unique talent to help inspire you) and then from scratch—with no previous reference point and never having read anything—create a name for each animal.

How long do you think it took Adam to complete this task? Weeks? Months? Years? I have no idea, but I do know it was not immediate. God was creating a servant man; a man who was not here for himself, but to serve others.

Adam had to accept responsibility for the needs of the animals all day long. People also have needs all day long, whether at work or home. It was vitally important for Adam to see the needs of others as opportunities to serve; not as impositions or inconveniences that would keep him from doing what he thought he might be entitled to do at any given moment.

These needs were brought to Adam every day—day after day—for a very long time. Serving was not just what Adam did, it was becoming who he was.

Adam's daily acceptance of this responsibility was important. The need of the animals to be named was a real, legitimate need. In marriage, you and I are face-to-face with real, legitimate needs on a regular basis.

What was the need Adam was meeting every day as God sat and watched him work every day, day in and day out? It was the legitimate need for identity.

The animals were created by God; they were given identity by man. Each animal had a God-given ache in its heart to have a name and identity. I am sure God had no problem getting a herd together after the first day.

I can only imagine animals being able to somehow understand Adam's communication. For example, let's say a squirrel and a pigeon were in the first herd to approach Adam.

Imagine a squirrel standing in front of Adam, sitting up, clearly prepared to receive his name. Then imagine Adam looking at the little animal, pausing, smiling and then saying, "squirrel."

"Squirrel," you can almost hear the squirrel saying. "I'm squirrel."

"I am squirrel," he might have repeated so often that it eventually frustrated the unnamed animals. "Who are you?" he would then ask a given animal.

"I don't know," the unnamed animal would reply. "I have yet to meet the man, Adam."

The pigeon did the same thing, approaching unnamed animals and saying, "I am pigeon; who are you?"

The response was the same: "I don't know. I have yet to meet the man, Adam." Day after day, the birds also began to groan, they so desired to be named by the man.

You see, the need for identity of all creation was being met by the man, Adam, and his voice. All day long, Adam spoke and creatures rejoiced. Sound familiar? Speaking to create, Adam was becoming a servant like his Father.

His Father (God), specifically the Lord God, would leave heaven, come down, gather some eager animals, grab a seat, hang out, laugh and enjoy watching His son become like Him; a servant.

Through a process, God was imparting to Adam the ability to be responsible with the needs and identities of those around him. This was training to prepare Adam for the final stages of God's creation: a woman, and then marriage.

This servant process is so critical. Had Adam not become a servant prior to marriage, he would have been totally ill-equipped to handle the needs of a woman, the needs of marriage and the needs of a family. This foundational training is what God knows we need to be successful in marriage.

If we come at our marriage to be served instead of to serve the other person, we are setting ourselves up for significant, unnecessary pain. If a man or woman is not a servant, he or she is not ready for marriage.

If there is not a servant at the very core of who you are, you have totally missed why you are here on planet Earth, and why you are married and received a family. Each responsibility is designed to expand your ability and capacity to serve with excellence and a great attitude.

The servant DNA in Adam became the second stage of God's creation of marriage. Just as Adam was created from dirt, Eve would be created from the bone and blood of a servant man.

In his process of becoming a servant, Adam learned several key things. He learned to be responsible for others. He learned to be consistent. He learned to be creative on a daily basis. He

learned to work hard, obey God and enjoy God's presence during work.

Adam learned how to do his part. God did what was amazing and miraculous by creating the animals, then bringing them to Adam. Then, as part of learning how to be on a team, Adam did his part. Marriage is a lot like this. God does His miraculous part and we do our part—serving. {eoa}

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