

Born to Love: A Biblical Celebration of Relationships

Scripture taken from the NIV 1984

Passage on relationships		Reference	Question	
1	Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.	Genesis 1:26-27.	Humans were made for relationship, with God, with each other, with the rest of creation. What do you think it means that we were made in God’s Image? How are the genders affirmed? What can you thank God for?	
2	God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.	Genesis 1:31–2:3.	God rested on the “seventh day” from work for relationship. What does this teach us about the goal of creation. What does it mean for humanity to enjoy rest with God? How do you celebrate rest with God?	
3	The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.” Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam no suitable helper was found.	Genesis 2:18–20.	What are the clues here that humans are made for relationship? How is humanity included in the process of creating? Why aren’t other creatures sufficient companions for the man?	
4	So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman’, for she was taken out	Genesis 2:21–25.	God gives us a blueprint for marriage relationships. What do we learn about the relationship between men and women?	

	of man.” For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.		What do you think “one flesh” signifies? What is significant about the marriage relationship here? How does the rest of the Bible build on this?	
5	For God was pleased to have all his fulness dwell in Jesus, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation.	Colossians 1:19–22.	We conduct relationships in a fallen world. Reconciliation is the restoration of relationship. How has Jesus reconciled us to God? What can you be thankful for?	
6	Jesus replied “But at the beginning of creation God ‘made them male and female’. ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and the two will become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.”	Mark 10:5–9	How does Jesus apply God’s blueprint from Genesis 2? What do we learn about marriage here? How does this challenge our cultures view of marriage? How can you encourage married people you know?	
7	Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, “The two will become one flesh.” But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit.	1 Corinthians 6:15–17.	Sexual immorality is any sexual thought, word, or deed which lies outside God’s blueprint. How does Paul apply God’s blueprint from Genesis 2? How does the body image help us here? What	
8	Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body.	1 Corinthians 6:18–20.	Sexual immorality is any sexual thought, word, or deed which lies outside God’s blueprint. What reasons are we given to flee sexual immorality? How does this teach us to say no to sexual immorality? How can you honour God with your body?	

9	<p>“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.</p>	Eph 5:31–33.	<p>How does Paul apply God’s blueprint from Genesis 2 to marriage? What does he add to our understanding? What can we learn about marriage from Jesus? What can you pray for your married friends?</p>	
10	<p>“Why then,” they asked, “did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?” Jesus replied, “Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery.”</p>	Matthew 19:7–9.	<p>How does Jesus apply God’s blueprint for marriage in Genesis 2 to divorce? Why did Moses allow divorce? Why should we seek reconciliation not divorce? How can we help people avoid divorce?</p>	
11	<p>Drink water from your own cistern, running water from your own well. Should your springs overflow in the streets, your streams of water in the public squares? Let them be yours alone, never to be shared with strangers. May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. A loving doe, a graceful deer— may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be captivated by her love.</p>	Proverbs 5:15–19.	<p>Proverbs uses poetry to describe faithfulness in marriage. How do these word pictures help us to think about marriage? What do we learn about marriage here?</p>	
12	<p>You flood the LORD’s altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer pays attention to your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands. You ask, “Why?” It is because the LORD is acting as the witness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant. Has not the LORD made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth. “I hate divorce,” says the LORD God of Israel.</p>	Malachi 2:13–16.	<p>How does Malachi apply God’s blueprint from Genesis 2? What is the warning to God’s people in this passage? Why does God hate divorce? What is the antidote to marriage failure? What do we learn about how God sees marriage?</p>	
13	<p>Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your</p>	Deuteronomy 6:4–7	<p>Humans are made for relationship with God. How does this passage encourage us to respond to God? How can we encourage our children</p>	

	children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.		to respond to God? What does this passage look like in your life ?	
14	Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. Honour your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.	Exodus 20:8–12	Humans are made for relationship with God and relationship with each other. What is the point of a Sabbath rest? What does Sabbath rest point to? How do you practise the idea of Sabbath? How can you honour your parents?	
15	Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honour your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise— “that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.” Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.	Ephesians 6:1–4.	Humans are made for relationship with each other. How is this to be reflected in earthly families? How can Fathers encourage their children?	
16	Keep on loving each other as brothers. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it. Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow-prisoners, and those who are ill-treated as if you yourselves were suffering. Marriage should be honoured by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.	Hebrews 13:1–5.	Humans are made for relationships with others. How is this reflected in this passage? How is love to be expressed to those around us? What opportunities do you have to show love in these ways?	
17	Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.	1 Corinthians 6:9–11.	The Bible warns about inappropriate expression of relationships. What behaviours are warned against here? What hope does the Lord Jesus offer? What do you need to seek forgiveness for ?	
18	Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the	Ephesians 5:25–27.	What role does God give to husbands? What does this look like	

	washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.		in everyday life? How can husbands care for the spiritual life of their wives? What can husbands learn from the example of Jesus about marriage?	
19	Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.	Ephesians 5:22–24.	What role does God give to wives? How does the relationship between Christ and the Church help us understand the marriage relationship? How is this counter cultural? What does this look like in everyday life?	
20	It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honourable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; and that in this matter no-one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him.	1 Thessalonians 4:3–6	What does this teach us about relationships between people? How do godly relationships contrast with worldly relationships?	
21	Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.	1 John 4:7–9.	Humans are made to love God and love each other. How does Jesus model love for us? How do we show our love for God? How can you show love in your situation?	
22	This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No-one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.	1 John 4:10–12.	How does Jesus demonstrate what love looks like? What does this love look like in human relationships? How do we demonstrate our love for God? How can you show this kind of love today?	
23	Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.	1 Corinthians 13:4–8.	Real love rolls up its sleeves and gets practical. What does practical love look like? How are you challenged to love in this way?	

24	Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am. But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion. To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife.	1 Corinthians 7:8–11.	Paul values singleness. Why does Paul give this advice to the unmarried? What advice does he give the married who are drawn to singleness? How can the grass appear greener on the other side for both states of relationship?	
25	I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs—how he can please the Lord. But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can please his wife— and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit.	1 Corinthians 7:32–34.	Paul values singleness. What advantage is there in singleness? How can single people encourage married people? How can married people encourage single people? Who can you encourage?	
26	Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no-one to help him up!	Ecclesiastes 4:9–10.	The Bible speaks a lot about the value of friendship. What is the value of good friendships here? What do you value about your friendships? How can you encourage your friends?	
27	My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no-one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.	John 15:12–15.	What does Jesus teach friendship looks like? How does Jesus demonstrate this in his life? What does this type of friendship look like in everyday life? How can you be this kind of friend?	
28	A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. Pr 17:17. Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of one's friend springs from his earnest counsel. Do not forsake your friend and the friend of your father, and do not go to your brother's house when disaster strikes you— better a neighbour nearby than a brother far away. Pr 27:9–10.	Various Proverbs	The Wisdom literature has much wisdom about friendship. What do we learn about friendship from these proverbs? How can you be this kind friend?	

	He who covers over an offence promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends. Pr 17:9.			
29	The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.	Galatians 5:19–26.	There are inappropriate ways of relating. What is the fruit of bad relationships? How can you put off or avoid relating like this? What is the warning for you in this passage? What things do you need to prune from your life?	
30	But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.	Galatians 5:19–26.	The Spirit filled life relates in a God honouring ways. What is the fruit of good relationships? How can you develop and grow good fruit ? What fruit would you like to develop?	
31	“Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.” (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.) Then the angel said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!’ ” And he added, “These are the true words of God.”	Revelation 19:6–9.	Humans are made for relationship with God. Christ came to reconcile us to God. How does this passage remind us of our hope? How are relationships celebrated here? Who does God invite to his feast? What can you give thanks for?	