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Presentation Transcript
God-Based Marriage, The Organizing Principle 1 – God’s Universal Hierarchy
By Bill Jacobs
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I was talking to a young woman recently in my office. She has had a terrible time with men. I asked her what she wanted, and she said, “Someone who would love me.” And I asked, “How long would you want them to love you?” And she said, “What do you mean?” And I said, “Well, just that. How long do you want them to love you?” She got this big question mark on her face, and she said, “I guess for as long as we live.” But then she said, “I don’t know if anybody ever thinks like that about being together.” She has no idea of a God-based marriage. The concept of being married for life wasn’t even something to think about. It doesn’t happen in her world.

Almost every couple I encounter is far away from marriage the way God intended it when He designed marriage for humans. Is it any wonder more people divorce than remain married? Now, I’m not judging her or anybody else. If you don’t know about it, you don’t know about it. But it’s just no wonder there’s so much misery in marriage, because people don’t understand where marriage came from and that it has organizing principles related to it. Most people have forgotten or have never learned how to do it so that it works. That’s why we’re presenting this series, *The Organizing Principles of the God-Based Marriage*. We have completed the introduction. It’s up on our Website, liferesource.org. You can also find it as a podcast and on the Website, for those who like to read more than listen, we have a transcript that you can download. And all that is freely offered.

Today we start the second in this series, which is about the first organizing principle of marriage – *God’s universal hierarchy*. Are you aware that every being in the creation and heaven is part of a massive hierarchy? There’s God, then Jesus, then the angels. Within in the angels, at the top, are two archangels, Michael and Gabriel, and then under them are seraphs, or seraphim, as they’re called in the Bible. Then there are an innumerable number of angels under them. There are also references to a number of other types of spirit beings in heaven. How they fit in with each other, we don’t know for sure, but we *do* know that they are all under Jesus. And Jesus is

under God. So we know that we are, right now, under them. But later, we will be over them, under God the Father and Jesus.

Let's look at a scripture about God's hierarchy. It's in 1 Corinthians 3:1.

1 Corinthians 3:1-4 – *But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people – he's saying this to a congregation in Corinth – but as people of the flesh – unconverted people, carnal minded people, fleshly minded people – as infants in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way? For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not being merely human?*

So we can learn a couple of things from this scripture about God's way of thinking about the way He created all His creation. One, when we don't understand how God's hierarchy works, we're spiritual infants. We're immature in the faith. When we understand what God is doing, and how relationships are conducted in His realm, and are to be conducted among ourselves, then that adds a level of spiritual maturity to us. Two, he specifically refers to our fleshly ideas about church government – you know, "I am of Paul, I am of Apollos." When we worship people, or try, in our own minds, to place them higher, we're foolish – acting on the flesh, or the *sarx* – that part of us that come from our adversary. He references the struggle in the church, that then existed, over who was to be the supreme, lord high potentate, almighty among men in the church. Pardon my sarcasm. Was it Paul? Or, was it Apollos? Who do you have your money on? Who do you have your money on today? Well, he tells the Corinthians, who were locked in this struggle between Paul and Apollos, that like babies, they're oblivious to the whole point of the church altogether. And then he says this to straighten out their thinking, to align it with God's way of looking at things. In verse 21, of 1 Corinthians 3:

V-21 – *So let no one boast in men. For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas – that's Peter – or the world or life or death or the present or the future – now that's a lot, isn't it? – all are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.*

So God's at the top. Everything is His. Christ is under the Father. Everything but the Father is His. We're under Christ and the Father. Everything else will be under us – even the angels. So what's the point? Well, why squabble? Why struggle to ascend to the hierarchy or put somebody, in our own minds, up in it? Why choose sides? All we have to do is wait and it will all unfold before us. Everything is going to be ours. All we have to do in the meantime is learn how the hierarchy works and how to fit into it. See, that's the whole point of this whole thing. All the relationships that we have in life are to help us learn how to get ready to be in the Kingdom of God, where those relationships function constantly, automatically.

There's another scripture I'm reminded of that Jesus said. Here's one of the foundational principles about the hierarchy.

Matthew 23:12 – *Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted* – Matthew 23:12.

And that is true for everything being in the universe, including you and me. That's how a person fits in to the hierarchy. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. That's how it works in God's system. So let's dig into to see how that would work in marriage.

Let's start with the relationship between God and Jesus. The first point I want to make is, Jesus said in John 10:30:

John 10:30 – *I and My Father are one.*

So two Beings, but how are They one? Well, they're the same kind of Being – Father and Son. A human father doesn't have dogs or cats for kids. He has humans. So Jesus and the Father are both God Beings. They're one in that way. They're God. That's how it works in God's realm. But how do they relate to each other? What roles do they play? The fact that we know about roles in itself is because we know that there is an organization to God, and that God the Father plays a role, and Jesus plays a role. But it doesn't *have* to be like that. We take it for granted because it's so common – because that's a part of the universe or even the whole creation – but what if all beings in heaven were like amoebas, for example – just swimming around in some sort of spiritual soup – everybody for himself in isolation? That would be another way things could be organized. But they're *not* organized that way, are they? We know God's life and realm aren't like that.

Let's look at another scripture – Matthew 3:16 and 17.

Matthew 3:16-17 – *And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on Him. And behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."* He was so proud of His Son, the heavens opened. It was amazing!

So God is over Jesus in the relationship. Jesus works for His Father. God's plan is a family business, I guess we could say. He's not a dictator. He's not a slave master. He's not a manager. He's not a CEO. He's a Father. So, it's like a family.

Paul said Jesus was God's, just like my daughters are mine. God said Jesus is His Son. So they're in relationship. I'm my daughters' father, like God is the Father of Jesus. But notice this: Jesus said the Father was His, right? It's right there. "I and My Father are one." Jesus refers to the Father as "My Father." So they belong to each other then, right? Jesus is God's and the Father's is Jesus'

I quoted the Song of Solomon in this series. (You really should go listen to that at some point, if you haven't yet. It's a road map for the series.) The woman in the relationship, in Song of Solomon, says, "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine." So she could, as well, have been saying, "I and my beloved are one. We're together." Right? So isn't that just so interesting that the same language is used to describe both a romantic relationship between a man and a woman and the relationship between God and Jesus.

Look again at what the Father said: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." My two daughters went off to college, and while there, my oldest one was baptized – at college. And after she graduated, she came home to continue her education. At that time I pastored a congregation then of about 500 hundred people, so the Passover service was really quite an operation. I was up on a stage doing the service – as a part of the service – when she walked by me in a line of women who were returning from the footwashing, which is a part of the Passover service modeled by Jesus Himself. And that's when it hit me. She was now a member of God's church – the body of Christ. I was in awe! I was well pleased with her – both of them, actually. I know just how the Father felt when Jesus was baptized. What do you suppose that implies? What does God have up His sleeve there? Well, as we will see, it's mindblowing! It's staggering! So let's examine their relationship further.

In Matthew 3:17 – we're going to read this again:

Matthew 3:17 – *"This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."*

So God *loves* Jesus. Right? He loves His Son. It says in John 3:35:

John 3:35 – *The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand.*

So God not only loves Jesus, but He trusts Jesus with everything. He's proud of Him. He respects Him.

I want you to notice that, in the Bible, when the subject of how the Father feels about Jesus comes up, it's *love* that predominates. It says many times in the Scripture that the Father loves Jesus. Let's look at another one. Here's one about what Jesus feels – John 4:34.

John 4:34 – *Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish His work."*

So God has given His plan into the hands of His Son, Jesus. And His Son says He lives to do God's plan. It's the most important thing to Him. It's what sustains Him. It moves Him forward. He loves His Father and wants to please Him, because He knows His Father loves Him. But in the Bible, when it covers the topic of how Jesus feels about His Father, the word *respect*, rather than love, predominates. We know that Jesus loves the Father, but when it talks about Jesus and

His relationship to God, He's serving God, He's doing God's will, He's sacrificing for God, He's following the lead of His Father. He has respect for Him. That's the nature of His relationship to the Father. Love is implied, but what's focused on is His role and how He is working for God.

Another thing that we can focus on is the fact that they're working *together*. 1 Corinthians 8:5 – Paul says:

1 Corinthians 8:5 – *For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth – as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords" – yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things – from whom are all things – and for whom we exist – so all these things that God created, He created for us – and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and for whom we exist. So God's plan – He created us – it's His idea – and yet He does all these things that He's doing with and for us through Jesus Christ.*

So that's an illuminating scripture. All things are from God the Father, and He chooses to deliver them all to us through His Son, Jesus Christ. So they work together toward the Father's goal. And the Father's goal is the Son's goal as well. So let's take a look at the day-to-day of how this works. Let's go to Genesis 1:26.

Genesis 1:26 – *Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. Okay. So what's going on there? Well, God said – who's He talking to? – us? Well, there's only two of Them at that point. Right? There are angels and all, but...there's God, who's plan it is and there's the One through whom it's being done. And there They are together talking about what They're going to do. And They decided together: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. We know from John 1 that Jesus created the universe at His Father's behest. Then He created Adam and Eve. But in this verse, we see them communicating with each other – "Let us make man in our image." Don't you just think there's got to be a lot more to the discussion than just that? I mean, think about how complex we all are. So they were together on this plan. They communicated. They were cooperating. Even when Jesus was on earth, they talked.*

In Luke 5:15, we can read:

Luke 5:15 – *But now even more the report about him went abroad, and great crowds gathered to hear him and to be healed of their infirmities. So lot's of pressure. Lots of people to talk to. Lots of people to heal – big crowds following Him wherever He went. But he would withdraw to desolate places and pray. So He's talking to God. They're communicating. And He was seeking guidance and help.*

So we saw that Jesus said His meat was to do the will of the Father. Let's look at another area – serving and caregiving. He saw Himself as a servant, carrying out His Father's plan.

If you watched the Super Bowl – that would be 2020 – the 49ers and the Chiefs played. The

49ers have this guy called Kyle Juszczyk. He's what's called a tight end. He's a big heavy guy, but he can catch well. He does a lot of blocking for the other receivers and runners. He's mainly in sort of a support role – kind of like Jesus, if we can make that comparison – maybe not a very good one.... But Kyle Juszczyk got to catch a touchdown in the Super Bowl. After all that support stuff, and behind-the-scenes stuff, and never being talked about very much during the season, there he is. He got to score a touchdown. He made it into the end zone with the ball. So everybody was really happy for him. When we're in a support role, it doesn't often seem that flashy, or there's not a lot of glory to it, but occasionally something great happens like that.

So Jesus saw Himself as a servant, carrying out His Father's plan. But look with me in Luke 22:41. This is after He's had the Passover supper and they're out in the garden. And it says:

Luke 22:41 – *And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*

So God sends an angel to take care of His Son. He is listening to Him. He's involved. Jesus asked Him if He was willing to remove the cup from Him, but the answer was, "No. We've got to follow the plan We made up." And God realized He needed some support, so He sent an angel to take care of Him.

So that's a snapshot of what the relationship between Jesus and the Father is like. Now I spent quite a bit of time on that. Why? Well, because every relationship in the universe is modeled after that relationship. Think about it. Think about Jesus and the church. Does Christ love the church like His Father loved Him? Is He caring, providing, leading the same way His Father loves Him? Yes, He is. If any being in the universe is going to have a relationship with the Father, it's *always* going to be by this design. And, if anyone is going to have a relationship with Jesus Christ, it will better be the same kind of relationship that Jesus and His Father have – unified, mutually loving, mutually respectful, mutually caring, serving, sacrificial. The only difference in Christ's relationship with the church and the one with His Father is this: in the relationship between God the Father and God the Son, both Beings are perfect. Whereas, when Christ loves the church, His relationship is with beings who are *not* perfect. So, in the church, we're also supposed to be learning *how* to love God's way, but none of us is there yet.

So how does a God member act whenever else is imperfect? How does Jesus act in relationship to the church when it's not perfect? Well, He sets the example and loves them like God the Father loves Him. Remember this scripture – John 15:12?

John 15:12 – *This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. That you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down*

his life for his friends.

So Jesus models the kind of love that He and His Father have – total committed sacrificial love. And He tells *us* that His example will draw us to Him. That’s how this works. When people love each other, they’re drawn toward each other, not repelled.

So let’s look now at the ministry – the human ministry – in the church – all under Jesus. Now, in the church, we have a relationship where nobody’s perfect – not the members and not the ministers – not the ones who have been called to oversight any more than those who are members. But He tells us *all* to love each other, like He loves us – committed, sacrificial, caring, etcetera, talking to one another, communicating our plans together. So He’s showing us how to make it work. And, if we love others that way, they will be drawn into relationship that is more like a godly relationship than a human one.

Since ministers aren’t perfect, they don’t know everything. And Jesus tells ministers that, even though they have oversight, they’re to be servants of the other members, just like Jesus was a servant to them. Do servants listen to their masters? Yes, they do. So Jesus listens to us, and ministers are to listen to us, too. So that’s part of it as well. So just like Jesus was a servant to them, sacrificing Himself, washing their feet and looking out for them, so the ministers are to treat the brethren of the church in the same way. They’re to be Christ-like in their love, as are all the members of the church as well.

So the way the relationship is modified, when both parties are not perfect, is to focus the more on serving and loving each other, like Jesus did. That’s the solution to it.

Okay now, how does this apply in a marriage? Well, in a marriage, it’s like the church – neither the leader nor the others in the family are perfect – so what do you think will be the focus of the relationship there? Well, yes, of course, it’s very similar to the way the ministry and the church are to treat each other with love and respect.

Notice this scripture. It’s Paul talking to husbands. Notice what he says:

Ephesians 5:25 – *Husbands, love your wives, as Christ love the church and gave Himself for her.*

So there’s that model again. And why is Christ loving the church and giving Himself for her? Because that’s how He related to the Father and the Father to Him. That’s how God relates. So He’s telling husbands that, if you want your marriage to be a good one, it has to be modeled after the relationship between Christ and the church. So, “You love your wife like Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her.” So we see that the husband is to act toward the wife as Christ acts toward the church – loving sacrifice is his behavior, if he’s to follow Christ.

So let me ask you this question. This would be for wives. How much does Jesus micromanage

you in your life? So husbands, are you listening to this as we go? How much freedom, ladies, does He give you? How much does He take care of you and meet your needs? How much does He work together with you like He and the Father work together? Can you tell He's there present with you and helping you? Well, if your husband does it that way, it's going to work. And, if he doesn't, it won't.

Because of this scripture, I've heard it said many times, that a marriage needs to be modeled after the relationship of Christ with the church. And that is true. But that's because the church's relationship with Christ is first modeled after the relationship with Christ and the Father. That relationship is the foundation for *all* relationships in the entire creation, on which all other relationships find their cohesion.

Parents and kids – the same in true in the family. Parents on top of the structure, but also on the bottom, as its foundation, loving and caring for their children in a sacrificial way. That's what makes family work.

In my work, I have a lot of parents that bring their kids to me, and they want me to fix their kid. And they don't realize that they're the ones that need to be fixed. It's not the kids who won't behave. It's that they show, by misbehavior, that they're missing something not provided by their parents. We're going to talk a *lot* more about that later. In fact, we already have talked about it in our series on *Parenting*. You can find that on the Website as well. But we'll talk more about it later in this, too.

Okay, so God the Father and Jesus Christ. Christ and the church. The ministry and the church. Husbands and wives. Parents and kids. We can even talk about this outside of the environment of the church. Marriage is outside the environment of the church. It's an institution for all people. We can even take this to the world of commerce and work, or to the military, or to sports teams. Every relationship benefits from following the model of God's way of relating. I've told this story before, but I like telling it so much, I'm going to tell it again. I met a man once, who was...I think he was the top man for Hewlett-Packard in Australia. He was a Malaysian man – a multi-millionaire – way rich – because he worked for Hewlett-Packard as a manager. And I was asking him some advice about how to manage something when I moved to Pasadena to take over the youth program of the church. And he told me this story. He said, "When I started out with Hewlett-Packard, I was a technician. But because I was a good technician, they soon made me a manager of other technicians, which was totally different skill sets. It doesn't make much sense, but that's how it happened. So I realized, now being a manager, that I would soon lose my technical expertise, and I would become reliant on the expertise of the technicians that work for me. So I drove my stake in the ground about company policy and all that sort of thing. And then I ran along beside them and said, "What can I do to help you be successful?" That's the story he told me to explain how he became a multi-millionaire working for Hewlett-Packard. And I said to him, "Muan, I think I just learned more about Christ-like leadership from a Buddhist than I've ever learned a minister in my own church." Of course, the

ministers in my own church that heard about that were not too happy about it, but most of them were in a hierarchy where they were all struggling to climb the ladder, instead of being a servant. I won't say all. And I don't mean to judge. I was right there with them. But that model that he laid out there is exactly how Christ treats the church, isn't it? He runs along beside us, and He's trying to help us be successful. He's a servant-leader. So truth is where you find it.

So the issue for many women today is, where do they find a man who knows how to lead like the Father and Jesus. It's frightening to put oneself into a relationship – especially a support role – when you don't know if you can trust the one you're supporting. So that's a question that has an answer. I promised at the beginning, in the introduction, that I would answer this question, and it would make a lot of people feel a lot less anxious about it. And we will also explain all of that as we continue with this series.

By the way, the next one in this series is about *Commitment*, an issue that follows right along behind with that concern about how to find a man who won't abuse a woman's commitment. And we must also add that men, too, have the same kind of apprehensions about women. How are they going to find one that will work *with* them. So let's talk straight about all that as we go forward in this series.

Until next time, this is Bill Jacobs, for LifeResource Ministries, serving children, families and the Church of God.