

Take-Home 1. From the Beginning

From the Beginning

What We Found

Marriage is not something human beings thought up. Genesis presents it as designed: a communion of persons, male and female, blessed with fruitfulness, made one flesh in a union that leaves and cleaves. The Church names that union a covenant (CCC 1601, 1603), though Genesis itself does not use the word.

The first thing God calls not good is a person being alone, and that is said before anything has gone wrong.

The word translated helper is used elsewhere in the Old Testament for God himself as Israel's help. It is not a word for a subordinate.

Genesis 2:24 has three verbs in order: a man leaves, he cleaves, and the two become one flesh. The sequence invites us to count the real cost of forming a new household, and the leaving comes first.

The chapter ends with two people who can be completely seen without being afraid.

MY GUESS. SEAL THIS AND BRING IT BACK IN SESSION 8

Write your own answer, by yourself. Do not discuss it with your fiancé, do not compare, do not revise it later. Fold this page over when you are done.

What are you actually promising on your wedding day?

Voices of the Church

VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ST. AUGUSTINE ON WHAT MARRIAGE IS FOR

St. Augustine taught, in substance, that marriage carries three goods that belong to it by God's design rather than by our arrangement: children (proles), faithfulness between the spouses (fides), and the sacred and indissoluble character of the bond itself, which he called sacramentum. He grounded these in the way marriage is given in Genesis, before any human law existed to regulate it.

The Church still works with these three goods, though later formulations distinguish ends, goods, and essential properties in ways Augustine did not. In Session 8 you will find all three voiced in the wedding rite, some in the questions before the consent and some in the consent itself.

Summary of his teaching in On the Good of Marriage.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ST. JOHN PAUL II ON THE BODY AND THE PERSON

Across his catecheses on human love, St. John Paul II read Genesis 2 as revealing something about every

person: that a human being is made for communion, discovers this by first discovering that he is alone, and that the body itself expresses the person rather than merely housing him.

In his reading, the man's cry at the sight of the woman is recognition. He is looking at someone who is like him and not him, and only then does he know what he is.

Summary of his catecheses on human love, collected as Man and Woman He Created Them.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH: THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL ON THE COVENANT

The Council taught that the intimate partnership of married life and love was established by the Creator and given its own laws, and that it arises in a human act by which the spouses give and receive one another, an act of irrevocable personal consent.

Two words there are load bearing for this study: covenant and consent. Marriage is not something the couple falls into. It is something they do, on purpose, by free and irrevocable consent, ordinarily expressed in vows.

Gaudium et Spes 48. Quoted in substance at CCC 1603 and 1639.

Live It This Week

- **Read it out loud together, once, this week.** Genesis 1 and 2, the two of you, in one sitting. Do not discuss it while you read. Discuss it after.
- **Fill in the sealed sheet alone.** Take-Home 1 has a box for the question, what are you actually promising on your wedding day? Write your own answer, separately, without comparing. Fold it and bring it back sealed. You will open it in Session 8.
- **One act of leaving.** Identify one decision you have been running past a parent that should now be running past your fiancé first, and change the order this week. Tell your parent kindly what you are doing.
- **Pray Night Prayer together once.** Compline from any breviary app, or simply the Our Father, an examination of the day, and the Hail Mary. Five minutes. This is the habit that survives.

BEFORE THE ALTAR

This week. Ask your parish what documents they need from each of you and when. Most parishes want a recently issued baptismal certificate, a confirmation record, and freedom to marry forms, and the timeline is longer than couples expect. Start it now and you will not be chasing paperwork in month five.

Also ask who will be preparing you besides this study, and put the dates in a shared calendar tonight.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Genesis 2:24

Before next session: Read Genesis 3, slowly, before Session 2. Twice if you can.

Catechism: CCC 355, 357, 369-372, 390, 1601, 1602-1605, 1643, 1652, 1702, 2331.