

Chapter 1

The Assignment Came Before the Marriage

God's Pattern for Purpose

"And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it." — (Genesis 2:15 - KJV)

The Principle That Changes Everything

Every blueprint begins with purpose. No architect designs a building without first knowing its intended use. No organization develops a strategic plan before defining its mission. Likewise, God did not establish marriage without first establishing its purpose.

One of the most overlooked truths in Scripture is found in the order of creation. Before there was a marriage... Before there was a wife... Before there was a family... There was an assignment.

Genesis 2:15 records that God placed Adam in the Garden of Eden "to dress it and to keep it." Adam was entrusted with responsibility. He was given meaningful work to accomplish before Eve entered the picture. This sequence is not incidental. It reveals God's original design.

Purpose preceded partnership.

God's first concern was not that Adam become a husband. God's first concern was that Adam faithfully carry out the work He had assigned. Only after establishing Adam's responsibility did God say:

"It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." — (Genesis 2:18 - KJV)

The wife was introduced into a story that already had direction. Marriage did not create the assignment. Marriage joined two people together in the pursuit of God's assignment.

Understanding Assignment

An assignment is more than a job. It is a responsibility entrusted by God that advances His purposes. Adam's assignment involved cultivating and protecting the Garden. For us today, an assignment may involve leadership, ministry, business, education, service, innovation,

discipleship, parenting, or another sphere of influence through which God accomplishes His will.

Assignments differ, but the principle remains the same. God gives responsibility before He provides partnership. Throughout Scripture, God consistently calls individuals to purpose before expanding their influence.

Examples include:

- ◆ Noah received instructions to build the ark before his family participated in preserving humanity.
- ◆ Moses received God's commission before leading the people of Israel.
- ◆ Nehemiah accepted the burden to rebuild Jerusalem before organizing the people to complete the work.
- ◆ The apostles received Christ's commission before being sent to disciple the nations.

God establishes the assignment. Then He gathers the people necessary to accomplish it. Marriage follows the same pattern.

Marriage Was Never Intended to Be Directionless

Many couples begin marriage by asking:

- ◆ Where should we live?
- ◆ How many children should we have?
- ◆ What careers should we pursue?
- ◆ What house should we buy?
- ◆ How should we manage our finances?

These are important questions. But they are secondary questions. The primary question is: **What has God called us to accomplish?**

Without that answer, every other decision risks becoming disconnected from God's purpose. Purpose becomes the filter through which every major decision is made. Instead of asking, *"What do we want?"* a purposeful marriage asks, *"What decision best supports the assignment God has entrusted to us?"*

Purpose Gives Direction

Purpose answers the question: **Why do we exist?** Without purpose, activity becomes busyness. Without purpose, success is difficult to define. Without purpose, couples often drift from one season of life to another, responding to circumstances instead of intentionally pursuing God's design.

Purpose provides direction. It helps determine:

- ♦ What deserves our time.
- ♦ What deserves our resources.
- ♦ What deserves our attention.
- ♦ What deserves our sacrifice.

Every "yes" should support the assignment. Every "no" should protect the assignment.

The Husband's Responsibility

Genesis presents Adam as the first recipient of God's assignment. This book therefore begins with a foundational premise: **The husband bears the primary responsibility for discerning, embracing, and leading the family toward the assignment God has entrusted to him.**

This responsibility is not about superiority. It is about stewardship. Leadership in Scripture is consistently described as sacrificial responsibility rather than personal privilege.

A husband who understands God's assignment recognizes that leadership means serving, protecting, providing direction, and remaining accountable to God for the faithful stewardship of what has been entrusted to him.

The wife is not called to become a passive observer. She is called to become an indispensable partner whose wisdom, gifts, discernment, encouragement, and strengths contribute to the fulfillment of God's purpose. Together they accomplish far more than either could accomplish alone.

Purpose Is Discovered, Not Invented

Modern culture often encourages people to create their own purpose. Scripture teaches something different. Purpose originates with God. It is discovered through prayer, obedience, Scripture, and faithful stewardship.

This means a husband does not invent his assignment. He seeks it. Likewise, a couple does not vote on God's purpose for their marriage. They prayerfully discern it. Their role is not to write God's agenda. Their role is to faithfully execute it.

Questions Every Husband Should Ask

As you begin this journey, prayerfully consider the following questions:

- What responsibilities has God already entrusted to me?
- What burdens has God consistently placed on my heart?
- What opportunities has He repeatedly opened before me?
- What gifts and abilities has He given me to steward?
- Where do I sense God calling me to make a lasting impact?
- If my marriage existed to advance one Kingdom purpose, what would it be?

Do not rush these questions. Purpose is often clarified through faithful reflection and prayer.

Building on a Firm Foundation

Every chapter that follows builds upon this principle: **The assignment came before the marriage.**

Because the assignment came first:

- ♦ The partnership has purpose.
- ♦ The shared vision has direction.
- ♦ The mission has focus.
- ♦ The strategic plan has meaning.
- ♦ The family has identity.
- ♦ The legacy has significance.

Everything begins with God's assignment. When a husband understands that assignment and a wife faithfully joins him as a corresponding partner, marriage becomes more than a relationship. It becomes a living expression of God's design.

Blueprint Exercise 1

Discovering the Husband's Assignment

Set aside uninterrupted time to prayerfully reflect on the following questions. Resist the temptation to answer quickly. Ask God for wisdom and write your responses honestly.

Part A: Reflection

1. What responsibilities has God already placed in my life?

2. What opportunities has God consistently opened for me?

3. What needs or burdens repeatedly capture my attention?

4. What gifts, talents, or experiences has God entrusted to me?

5. In what ways am I currently serving God's Kingdom?

Part B: Prayer

Ask God to reveal areas where your understanding of His assignment needs greater clarity. Write your prayer below.

Part C: Initial Assignment Statement

Complete the following sentence: **I believe God is calling me to faithfully steward my life by...**

Do not worry if your answer is incomplete. This statement will be refined as you continue through **The Marriage Purpose Blueprint™** and begin aligning your assignment, your marriage, and your family's future with God's design.