

All Men Need “Helpers”

In my last post, I indicated that many guys are bad at taking care of “their sh*t” and owning up to their responsibilities. This goes beyond having the basic “man-skills” or “manning up” to go it alone. It means recognizing when we need help.

But can a woman be a man’s “helper” and supporter?

Look, I’m a big fan of guys having male friendships but we also need strong women in our lives. As wives, as close friends, and as family.

Before anyone gets bent out of shape by my use of the term, “helper”, let me define the term since it is often misconstrued, misstated, and far from biblical truth.

The Biblical Truth: Man Needs Help

There are many people who believe and incorrectly teach that the term “helper” used for the first created woman suggests an idea of “employee” or a “servant” or a “domestic helper” or that the Bible subjugates women. But Scripture states otherwise.

Each of the creation accounts in Genesis 1, 2, and 5, highlight the similarity, unity, and equality of men and women. They tell us that their joint task involves being God’s caretakers of the world by ruling over the animals and every

living thing on earth (Gen. 1: 26-30).

The second book of Genesis says that God felt that the first man, Adam, needed a “helper” as his partner in Eve.

“Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner.”

— *Genesis 2:18 (NRSV)*

The Key is in Hebrew

In my research, several blogs indicated the original Hebrew word used for “helper” in Genesis 2 is “Ezer” (pronounced “ay-zer”), which some suggest is difficult to translate into English but holds the clues to God’s intention.



The word *ezer* in Hebrew.

The letters, reading from right to left, are ayin, zayin, and resh.

Ezer is pronounced “ay-zer”.

According to this blog on mutuality and equality between men and women in the church and in marriage, the word “Ezer” is only used in the Old Testament in the context of vitally important and powerful acts of rescue and support.

Ezer means “one who saves another from extremity” or “one who gives help or relief rendered when another is in danger.” It translates as the aspects of God’s character as our strength, our rescuer, our protector, and our help.

God Is Our Helper

Every other application of Ezer than its use in Genesis 2 describes God’s saving action to His people, to describe God, the Savior of the nation Israel. It is a word of infinite worth, that gives created human beings infinite worth.

Scholars have tallied up the twenty-one times *Ezer* appears in the Old Testament: twice in Genesis for the woman (Genesis 2:18, 20), three times for nations to whom Israel appealed for military aid (Isaiah 30:5; Ezekiel 12:14; Daniel 11:34), and sixteen times for God as Israel’s helper (Exodus 18:4; Deuteronomy 33:7, 26, 29; Psalms 20:2; 33:20; 70:5; 89:19 [translated “strength” in the NIV]; 115:9, 10, 11; 121:1 – 2; 124:8; 146:5; Hosea 13:9). This prompts the upgrading of *Ezer* from mere “helper” to “strong helper.”

Woman is More than a Helper

The word *Ezer* is also used to describe Eve as someone who would give vital strength to Adam.

Another post on the same site about marriage equality states the word *Ezer* is qualified by the word *kenegdô* that is translated as “suitable for him”, which means that Eve was designed as a corresponding and equal partner for Adam. The

word *kenegdô* indicates the Ezer is the man's match – literally, “as in front of him”.

כִּנְגְדוֹ

The Hebrew word
Kenegdo in Genesis 2:18-20

Therefore, *Ezer kenegdô*—“a helper suitable for him”—is used for the first woman without any narrow qualifications, prescribed limits, or cultural restrictions. It was not specified anywhere in Genesis 2 how the first woman was to express and apply her help towards her husband but presumably to alleviate the man's “alone-ness”. She is to partner with him in their joint commission given in Genesis 1:28 to be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it.

As soon as God introduced the newly-formed woman to Adam, the problem of being alone was solved because Eve was Adam's equal partner, perfectly compatible with him.

The post also references how Victor Hamilton puts it: “[*Kenegdô*] suggests that what God creates for Adam will correspond to him. Thus the new creation will be neither a superior nor an inferior, but an equal. The creation of this helper will form one-half of a polarity and will be to man as the South Pole is to the North Pole”.

She's a Life-saver

As I read more on this topic, I believe the term helper does nothing whatsoever to state, imply, or hint at the subordination of women. Instead, "helper" (*ezer kenegdô*) has the meanings of strength and similarity.

A post by John Eldridge, author of the great book, *Wild at Heart* suggests Ezer used for Eve means something far more powerful than just "helper"; it means "life-saver." Eve is a life-giver as a mother and she is Adam's ally. It will take *both* of them to create life and sustain life.

The post suggests *ezer kenegdô* for the woman as a man's savior (with a little "s"; not a capital "S" as used for Jesus, our Savior). She is the rescuer of a man who releases him from his aloneness, from his incompleteness, from his ineffectiveness, and from his inefficiency.

I will even suggest that this term suggests the idea of a "completer." How often have you heard someone say to their spouse: "You complete me"?

Eve completed Adam.

Women Help Fill in Men's Gaps

The great boxing "theologian", Rocky Balboa (insert winking laughter emoji), describes how his trainer Paulie's sister Adrian completes him in a scene from the 1976 movie:

Paulie: [talking about Adrian] You like her?

Rocky: Sure, I like her.

Paulie: What's the attraction?

Rocky: I dunno... she fills gaps.

Paulie: What's 'gaps'?

Rocky: I dunno, she's got gaps, I got gaps, together we fill gaps.



Rocky Balboa and Adrian

We've all got gaps. God created both men and women with "gaps" so that we can complete each other to form a covenantal union as equals.

Genesis 1 teaches that God created male and female uniquely in His image to be co-rulers on the earth. It doesn't assert that Adam had a greater level of authority or responsibility than Eve. God commanded us to jointly share the responsibilities of dominion over the created order of His world.

But Genesis 2 adds another dimension: God made Adam first and gave him responsibilities before creating Eve. **This sequence requires a man to have responsibilities and to get the help of a woman as needed.**

The New Testament also calls husbands and wives to be submissive to one another. He wants us to live as heirs together, bound in a relationship of mutual servanthood and responsibility (1 Corinthians 7:3- 5; Ephesians. 5:21; 1 Peter. 3:1-7; Genesis. 21:12).

We help and serve each other.

Men Need Multiple Helpers

In my prior post, I asked: **Can your wife be your best friend and supporter for all of your needs as a man?**

I trust that I've now made a good case that your wife should be a helper to you as a man and as a father. Of course, we must also rely on God for support and help.

But a man also needs a God Buddy since there are some things that only a very close guy friend. He needs a best friend.

So that poses an interesting twist: **Can your wife also be your "best friend"?**

Stay with me in the next post when I unfold that question.