Bob: There is something greater at stake when it comes to your marriage relationship than just your happiness. Here’s Dr. Al Mohler.

Al: Where marriages are intact and where families are flourishing, the entire society/the entire culture flourishes. In reverse, where marriage is not respected—where marriages are not intact / where families are not flourishing—the entire civilization begins to crumble.

Bob: This is FamilyLife Today for Thursday, January 22nd. Our host is the President of FamilyLife®, Dennis Rainey, and I’m Bob Lepine. There are a lot of reasons why you and I should both be working hard to make sure our marriages are strong and intact. We’re going to hear some of those reasons today from Dr. Al Mohler. Stay tuned.

And welcome to FamilyLife Today. Thanks for joining us on the Thursday edition. So, you think Dr. Al Mohler, President of Southern Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky—you think he understands what the Bible has to say about marriage?

Dennis: I think he, not only understands it—he knows how to explain it. And I just want to tell our listeners—if you are anywhere near a seatbelt, strap it on. [Laughter]

Bob: Even if the car’s not going anywhere? [Laughter]

Dennis: Even if it’s not going anywhere, just put your seatbelt on there. Get in a quiet place, where you can listen to this broadcast very carefully because you’re going to hear a message that really, I think, unpacks God’s thinking of why He created marriage and why it is so important for us to understand the nobility and the purpose of marriage and what God was up to—especially in this culture today, Bob.

We shouldn’t be apologizing for the Bible and what the Bible says about marriage today. As never before, we need to realize it’s the way it works.

Bob: Right.

Dennis: It was the way God designed it to be successful.
**Bob:** You and I first heard this message when Dr. Al Mohler presented it at our *I Still Do*® marriage event, back in Portland, several months ago.

**Dennis:** Yes; in fact, I want our listeners to know—we hosted three events in arenas and had a simulcast for the third event. We touched about 43,000 lives through those three events and the simulcast. When you support *FamilyLife Today*, you, not only support this broadcast, but you also support us as the voice for biblical marriage today in our country.

**Bob:** Dr. Mohler was one of the first people we went to see when we were putting together *The Art of Marriage*® video series for couples because we wanted him speaking into this subject, along with Crawford Loritts, and Voddie Baucham, and Paul David Tripp, and Dave Harvey—I mean, a number of men and women speaking on the subject of marriage.

And it’s encouraging—we’ve had more than a half million people who have gone through *The Art of Marriage*—either as an event or as a small group—and I know a lot of people are putting their small groups together for 2015. If you’ve not been through *The Art of Marriage*, go to TheArtofMarriage.com if you want more information.

Let’s listen to Part One of Dr. Al Mohler’s message on God’s design for marriage.

[Recorded Message]

**Al:** We want to celebrate one of God’s greatest gifts to humanity. It just goes by that name that brings us here together—the name of marriage—a name that rings with a certain clarity among us because we recognize, as we are here, not just in the name of marriage, but more importantly in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are here to recognize that marriage is actually a gift—one of God’s greatest gifts to us.

But let’s forget for a moment that we have any idea that marriage is anything other than a human invention. Let’s just assume, for a moment, that we’re going to look at this from an entirely secular perspective. We’re going to step out of the biblical worldview and just imagine that we’re thinking in purely secular terms, for a just a moment, about marriage. Here is the bottom line of the purely secular understanding of marriage—it is a fantastic thing. It is essential for humanity and for human flourishing. Even the secular world understands the singular importance of marriage.

Tragically, one of the reasons why there is so much understanding of why marriage is so important now is because of the marginalization and subversion of marriage—the fact that there are so many marital breakups, and there has been so much devastation in marriage. In the wake of that, our pathology and patterns lead even secular observers to say: “Now, wait just a minute. Bad things are happening now that weren’t happening when marriage was the central institution of human existence; and when it was honored, in every way, by society; and when society believed that it was its
responsibility to protect marriage—to encourage husbands and wives to stay together—a structure of law and cultural customs and social expectations.”

They understand that, when that fell apart—and when marriage began to also fall apart and fall to the side—bad things have been happening. That means what they are seeing is actually a testimony to the goodness of marriage because—here are some things you need to keep in mind—where marriages are intact and where families are flourishing, the entire society / the entire culture flourishes. In reverse, where marriage is not respected—where marriages are not intact / where families are not flourishing, the entire civilization begins to crumble.

Here is a basic thing, even political scientists understand—and this is an inflexible rule of politics—where marriage and the family are large, in terms of significance, the government can be small; but when marriage and the family, in terms of significance are small, the government has to be huge. That will give you something to ponder as you think about just the secular understanding of the importance of marriage.

Edmund Burke said that society requires the existence of little platoons that make civilization possible. The most fundamental of those little platoons is the little platoon in your house—you, your spouse / the two of you together, with your kids—that’s the most important little platoon that makes society possible.

But it’s not just society at large / it’s not just culture that benefits—even from a secular understanding of the importance of marriage—it’s also the husband and the wife. Both the husband and the wife / both the man and the woman, united in the institution of marriage—even from a purely secular perspective—do better than their unmarried counterparts.

Women—especially, over the lifespan and especially as you get to the end of that lifespan—report far higher personal satisfaction if they’ve been in an enduring marriage during that time. The experience of being a wife / the experience of being a mother—and all that goes with that—brings incredible life satisfactions that simply wouldn’t come any other way. There are all kinds of reasons why women, at every stage of life—but especially toward the end stages of life—indicate that marriage was central to their happiness and to their fulfillment.

And for men, you can even add something else—that is—men, who are married, and men, who then stay married, live longer—just from a purely secular analysis—than men who do not. And guys, let’s just talk amongst ourselves here. We know why that is so. [Laughter] It’s because the only reason we ever go to a doctor is because our wife makes the appointment. And let’s just confess. We know that the only reason we know what to take and when—we don’t even worry about why—is because our wife says, “You take the blue one right now.” And she watches you do it. [Laughter]
That’s just one indication. I mean, it tells us something—that men actually live longer because they are married. It’s because someone is watching out for us. It’s also because stress levels and all of the things that combine in order to indicate that married men are healthier than unmarried men. This is just a purely secular perspective.

What about kids? Well, as it turns out—even common, secular sociological/economic analysis indicates that children raised in intact homes, with a father and a mother in the home—when those kids are compared to other children, there is a spectacular difference—an absolutely amazing difference. So different that—quite frankly, that is the greatest national emergency we now face because you look at it—and so many of the pathologies that are large across our society / so many of the things that make our headline news—they are minimized to just an unbelievable extent if you just put that same child in the context of an intact family.

Boys—raised in non-intact homes, which generally means with a single mom—those boys, when they reach adolescence and young adulthood, their likelihood of police contact increases exponentially. Their likelihood of not finishing high school, their likelihood of not going to college, their likelihood of having all kinds of bad behavioral problems, their likelihood of having certain kinds of social and even educational disabilities—they go up tremendously—you just take dad out of the home. Just having dad in the home is a phenomenal gift to an entire society because of its impact upon boys and young men.

And upon young women?—here is an amazing thing—we didn’t know this until fairly recently. The hormonal impact of a father in the home is actually something that helps to regulate the entire home—even as the mothers regulate other parts of the home. Did you know that where the father / the biological father is in the home—and in an intact marriage and where the mom and the dad are living with their kids—girls go into puberty later than if you take the father out of the home? And that also impacts a large number of things that have to do with the life of that girl or that young woman, and her relationships, and her future. That’s just a secular perspective—that’s just skimming kind of the top of the research.

If you just consider a purely secular perspective, one thing becomes abundantly clear—where marriages are intact and flourishing, society flourishes. Where marriages and families are intact, the government can be small. Where families are intact and where marriage is honored, good things come to every single member of the family—to the wife, to the husband, to the kids—to the neighborhood, the city, the community, and beyond.

But we’re not here because we just wanted to look at sociology, and economics, and political science. We don’t want to just look at medical research and pediatrics. We’re here because we are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are here because marriage is not merely a
sociological contrivance. We are here because God said, “It is not good for man to be alone”; and He gave us the institution of marriage.

Of course, before He gave us the institution of marriage, He gave us the gift of gender. As we read in the Book of Genesis—in the very first chapter: “So God created man in His image, in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them.” So, from the very beginning, God’s creative purpose—His glory in creation was to make this one creature, made in His image, unlike every other creature. That creature He made in His image—He made male and female. He created us for each other.

We are made in God’s image. We are the only creature made in God’s image. None of the other creatures are made in God’s image. Every one of the other creatures displays God’s glory in its creatureliness; but only the human, made in God’s image, can consciously know the Creator and glorify Him. There is a huge contrast—an infinite contrast. That’s why those who confuse the difference between human beings and mere animals are doing a disservice that fundamentally flies in the face of, not only a reality that should be apparent to us all, but to the reality that is revealed in Scripture.

Not long ago, a German zoo put together an exhibit. They decided they wanted to show that human beings are just another animal. So, they created an exhibit—that they put human beings in it, wearing loin cloths and similar. They put them in there, and they put “Homo sapiens” on the outside. They said, “Look, it just shows that human beings are just like any other animal.”

I was asked by the national media to respond to it. I said, “That would make perfect sense if the giraffes put them in there and, then, put up the sign.” [Laughter] I mean, if that would have happened—if you had bears, lining up human beings, saying: “Get in right now. We’ll feed you when it’s time,” and if they named us—but that’s not the way it happens. That’s not the way it happens at all.

There is an infinite distinction between the human being and every other creature because, even though we are a creature, we are the creature made in God’s image. Every one of those other critters demonstrates the glory of God in its critterness—the giraffe with its neck, the dog that is just so incredibly happy all the time. I know this is a stretch—but the cat shows the glory of God in its catness. [Laughter] It’s one of those imponderables—I’m going to understand that in heaven. But right now, I just understand that it’s true. Every time a cat looks at me, I think it’s seeing things that—well, never mind. [Laughter]

But you know, you look at all these animals and you recognize that they are all showing God’s glory. It’s easy for me to see that in our dog, Baxter the Wonder Beagle. I mean, he’s just so happy all the time. I just wish I could be that happy. It’s like Martin Luther said, “We should desire God...”—we should aim to desire God the way our dog enjoys a piece of meat—unbridled joy. He experiences things I don’t experience. I mean, when you go outside with Baxter, he is all into smells. That is his nature, and he smells
things—he looks at me like, “You have no idea what you are missing.” [Laughter] I’m glad to miss, quite frankly. But you know, God’s glory is in that—that is what he is supposed to do. He is supposed to be a beagle. In his beagleness, he’s doing that; but you know, he doesn’t worry about that. He never gives it any thought—he’s not self-conscious.

I like watching animal shows on television. It was convenient having a son in the house when he was a little boy and then a teenager because I could say, “Well, I’m watching to spend time with him. [Laughter] It’s for him.” And it’s true because he was as fascinated with them as I was. You look at these things, and you see it.

You know, the ultimate animal show for guys to watch is one in which there’s an act of predation about to happen. And there is a little gazelle or something like that—it’s very cute. Your heart goes out to it, and it’s out there. It’s just kind of prancing around. Then, you see the lion in the grass; and he’s not having his quiet time. [Laughter] He’s got it, and you know what he’s plotting.

Then, you see the crouch. You see him start to move, and you see—then, you see the grass move. Then, all of a sudden, you see the act; and it’s horrifying. I mean, that lion is not thinking, “This is a cute little gazelle,”—it’s just taking him down. He takes him down, and it’s horrifying—and you look at this. Then, at the end of it, he’s sitting there, smacking his lips—blood all over his face. You’ve never had—you’ve never seen one of those lions go: “Whoa! What is in me?! I need to see a therapist. This is—I mean—I don’t understand myself. I mean, I look at that thing; and the next thing you know…this!” No, what he—he’s smacking his lips, thinking, “Okay, now, I don’t have to do this for three days.”

I mean, human beings have a conscience. We’re the only being made in God’s image—we have that moral understanding. We have a relationship with the Creator. We know that He is; and we, furthermore, have built into us a desire to know Him.

As you’ll notice in Genesis, Chapter 2—there is something very interesting here because, when we think about marriage, we immediately go to Genesis, Chapter 2; and that’s right. That’s where we ought to go; but one of the interesting things about going to Genesis, Chapter 2, is that includes, in its narrative, something most of us forget to include when we talk about God’s gift of marriage. Let’s look at it for a minute.

Beginning in verse 18 of Genesis, Chapter 2:

Then, the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone, I will make him a helper fit for him.” So, out of the ground, the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature that was
its name. The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field.

But for Adam, there was not found a helper fit for him. So, the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man; and while he slept, He took one of his ribs, and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man, He made into a woman, and he brought her to the man. Then, the man said, “This, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She should be called woman because she was taken out of man.”

Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

The part that many of us don’t remember is included in that—is the part where the Lord says: “It’s not good for man to be alone. I will make a helper fit for him.” Then, we immediately go to: “So, the Lord caused a great sleep to fall upon Adam; and while he slept, He opened his side and took out a rib...”—but, no, there is something between those two verses—and that’s Adam naming the other animals.

So, Adam has the privilege, and it’s an incredible privilege. It’s actually a demonstration of what we are—we see commanded in Genesis 1:28 where Adam and Eve are told to take dominion over all the earth—dominion over every creeping and crawling thing and everything that moves upon the earth. Part of that dominion was Adam names every one of these creatures. Whatever Adam named it—that was its name.

But the most interesting thing about that is—not only the demonstration of what that must have been like and of the dominion God gave to Adam—but the declaration, “But for Adam, there was not found a helper fit for him.” That’s an interesting experience; isn’t it? I mean, just imagine—Adam’s watching everything go by. He’s going: “Cute,” “Little bit scary...” You know, he’s just naming them all as they go by. He realizes, at the end: “Not one of them is for me. Not one of them is as I am—made in God’s image.”

Then and only then, did God cause a great sleep to fall upon Adam. And out of Adam, He made the woman. He didn’t make the woman separate from the man. He made the woman out of the man. He made Adam to fall asleep; and out of Adam, He created the woman.

Then, you’ll notice the very same thing happened—even as God presented all the animals to Adam and whatever he named them that was its name—so, also, He presents the woman, now, made out of Adam’s side as the complement / the helper—the companion for him. When Adam sees her, he says, “This is now flesh of my flesh and bone of my bones,”—“This corresponds to me / she is as I am. She is made for me/I am for her,”—“She shall be called woman because she was taken out of man.”
Bob: Well, we’ve been listening to Part One of a message from Al Mohler, the President of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, speaking on God’s design for marriage. And it all started back in Genesis, Chapter 2.

Dennis: And if you like that kind of teaching—authoritative from the Scriptures: “This is what God intended your marriage to be, the purpose He had for it, the nobility He created for it,”—then, I think you’re going to thoroughly enjoy Dr. Mohler again in our Art of Marriage small group because he’s in that series,—

Bob: Right.

Dennis: —along with Barbara and other women who teach as well. It’s a great opportunity for a small group to connect around a relevant subject that, frankly, Bob, we don’t have enough small group material on today. The Art of Marriage does a great job of, not only helping people discuss it, but also apply it, and take it home, and make it work in their own marriage.

Bob: Yes, when we put the series together, we sat down with folks from all over the country. I mean, we sat down with Paul David Tripp, and Michael Easley, and Mary Kassian, Crawford Loritts, and Voddie Baucham. We unpacked God’s design for marriage.

The interesting thing to me is—those folks, who have gone through this material in small groups—we’ve done some surveys with folks who have gone through it. We’ve asked them, “Would you recommend this series to your friends?” Ninety-seven percent of them say, “Oh, yes.” And I don’t think you can get a much better endorsement than that.

I want to encourage our listeners—find out more about The Art of Marriage small group material. This would be something that would be great for your small group to go through this winter / this spring. You can get information, along with some special offers we’ve got available online, when you go to FamilyLifeToday.com and click the link in the upper left-hand corner of the page that says, “GO DEEPER.” Right there, you will see The Art of Marriage. Click to get more information.

You can order, online, if you’d like; or if you’d prefer, you can call 1-800-FL-TODAY—1-800-358-6329. Ask for information about The Art of Marriage small group material and plan to spend six weeks together with some friends going through this material. I think all of you will benefit from looking carefully at what the Bible has to say about our relationship as husband and wife.
Now, I want to give a quick shout out to those folks who help make *FamilyLife Today* possible—those of you who stand with us as we seek to provide practical biblical help for marriages and families, day in and day out—on this radio program, on our website, through our resources and our events. We could not do without you guys. We really do appreciate those of you who are Legacy Partners and those of you who will get in touch with us, from time to time, to make an online donation or call to make a donation over the phone. We’re grateful for your support.

In fact, right now, if you can help with a donation, as we begin 2015, we’d like to say, “Thank you,” by giving you a resource that we think will help you begin 2015 in a great way in your marriage relationship. It’s a book by Dennis and Barbara Rainey called *Moments with You.* Each page is a daily devotional for couples. There is a Scripture verse, a brief article from Dennis and Barbara, some questions you can talk about together as husband and wife, and then, an opportunity to pray together as husband and wife. We’d like to send you a copy of this book if you are able to help us with a donation today.

Go to FamilyLifeToday.com. Click the link in the upper right-hand corner of the screen that says, “I Care,” to make an online donation; or call 1-800-FL-TODAY. Make your donation over the phone. Or you can mail your donation to *FamilyLife Today* at PO Box 7111, Little Rock, AR. The zip code is 72223. Be sure to request your copy of the book, *Moments with You,* when you get in touch with us. Again, we appreciate your partnership with us in this ministry.

And we hope you can join us back tomorrow when we’re going to hear Part Two of Al Mohler’s message on God’s design / God’s purpose for the marriage relationship—why marriage is more important than you may have realized. That comes up tomorrow. Hope you can be here.

I want to thank our engineer today, Keith Lynch, along with our entire broadcast production team. On behalf of our host, Dennis Rainey, I’m Bob Lepine. We will see you back next time for another edition of *FamilyLife Today.*

*FamilyLife Today* is a production of FamilyLife of Little Rock, Arkansas. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow.

We are so happy to provide these transcripts to you. However, there is a cost to produce them for our website. If you’ve benefited from the broadcast transcripts, would you consider [donating today](#) to help defray the costs?

Copyright © 2015 FamilyLife. All rights reserved.

www.FamilyLife.com