

Biblical Manhood & Womanhood – A Primer
LIFE Fellowship, December 4, 2009

Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Defend your position.

1. Men and women are equal
2. Equality means that there should be no distinctions between men and women (except for the obvious biological/physical differences)
3. Gender equality means that we should call God 'our Mother' as well as 'our Father'
4. The Bible's teachings on men and women reflect the male-dominated cultures of ancient times, and are therefore no longer binding on us in our culture today
5. Men, not women, should be the ones initiating a dating relationship
6. In a marriage relationship, husbands have the authority to override vows their wives have made to the Lord.
7. It doesn't matter whether a man marries a woman or another man; what matters is that they are committed to each other in an exclusive relationship
8. Both men and women are free to serve in any role in the church, as determined by their gifting

A basic approach to developing a Biblical worldview

Consider:

Creation

- What are God's purposes & design for _XXXXXX_ in Creation?

Fall

- What effects do the Fall and sin have on _XXXXXX_?
- What are the implications of the Fall/the presence of sin on _XXXXXX_ today?

Redemption

- What are the implications of Christ's redemption on _XXXXXX_?
- How does this work out practically?
 - Tension between the "now" (living in a fallen world) and the "not yet" (living in the perfected New Creation) → need for wisdom

Man as Male and Female

Read Genesis 1:26-31; Genesis 2:7-25; Genesis 3:1-24

As you read, consider

- What are God's purposes & design in Creation for mankind as male & female?
- What effects did the Fall and sin have on mankind as male & female?
- What are the implications of the Fall/the presence of sin on mankind as male & female today?
- What are the implications of Christ's redemption on mankind as male & female? How does this work out practically today?

Creation

- What are God's purposes & design in Creation for mankind as male & female?

1) Man was created in God's image as male and female (Gen. 1:26-27)

- Something about the image of God necessitated Man to be created as male and female
- God's design for mankind as male and female reflects His image in various ways, including:

a) ***Harmonious interpersonal relationships***

-Unity in diversity

-God as 'three-in-one' (Father, Son, Holy Spirit); Man as 'two in one' (male, female)

-deep unity between male & female; most clearly seen in marriage

-deep spiritual & emotional unity, showing itself in physical unity ('one flesh')

"This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. (Gen 2:23-24)

-Relationship between male & female to reflect relationship between persons of the Trinity

-Relationship rooted in love, mutual respect & honor

b) ***Equality in personhood and worth***

-reflects the equality in substance and worth of the Persons of the Trinity

-In Creation, male and female

-are created equally in God's image (Gen 1:27)

-equally receive God's blessing (Gen 1:28)

-are together given dominion over the earth (Gen 1:28-30)

-are created of the same substance (Gen 2:21-22)

-thus, man and woman are of equal importance and equal worth

- What are God's purposes & design in Creation for mankind as male & female?
(continued)

c) ***Difference (complementarity) in function and authority***

-reflects differences in function between the Persons of the Trinity

-e.g. The Father sends, the Son goes (John 3:16)

- God (the Father) is the head of Christ (1 Cor. 11:3);
- The Son submits to the Father (1 Cor. 15:28)
- The Holy Spirit is sent by the Father and the Son (John 15:26)

-**equality** in substance, **difference** in function between the persons of God

-thus, headship/submission does NOT mean superiority/inferiority

-rather, submission = voluntary yielding in love

-submission is a conscious act or decision of the will

-a similar dynamic of headship & submission between the man & the woman was established at Creation

-man and woman are equal in personhood and worth, but

-man was created to have primary responsibility for headship/ leadership

-Adam was created first – concept of “primogeniture”, or “right of the firstborn” (the firstborn had leadership in the family) – cited by Paul in 1 Timothy 2:12-13

-Adam named the woman God created for him (Gen. 2:23; 3:20) – indicating position of authority

-Adam was called to account first by God (Gen. 3:9-11)

-Adam bears primary responsibility for the Fall in Scripture, even though Eve sinned first (e.g. Romans 5:15; 1 Cor. 15:22)

-woman was created to be a “suitable helper” for the man (i.e. to complement, or “complete” him)

-i.e. men and women are created **equal, but different**

- What are God's purposes & design in Creation for mankind as male & female?

2) Created for companionship/relationship

- Part of being created in God's image (see above)
- Most deeply seen in marriage
- Marriage characterized by
 - Exclusivity - 1 man and 1 woman leaving parents and united to each other (Gen. 2:24)
 - Fidelity – united for life (see Jesus' comment on Gen. 2:24 in Matt. 19:1-9)
 - Intimacy – deep union of 2 lives (Gen. 2:23-24), including physical/sexual intimacy (“one flesh” relationship)
 - Purity – naked without shame (Gen. 2:25); cf. purity of the marriage bed in Heb. 13:4
 - Partnership – the wife, a “suitable helper” (Gen. 2:18) in the work of subduing the earth
- Marriage relationship includes mandate to “be fruitful and increase in number” (Gen. 1:28)

Fall

- What effects did the Fall and sin have on mankind as male & female?
 - God's purposes and design for mankind as male and female were distorted by the Fall
 - the Curse brought a ***distortion of previous roles***, rather than the introduction of new roles
 - e.g. childbirth was part of the created order (Gen 1:28), but would be more painful (Gen 3:16)
 - work was part of the perfect world (Gen 2:15), but would become wearisome (Gen 3:17-20)
 - with respect to the male-female relationship:
 - “*Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.*” (Gen. 3:16, ESV)
 - the woman's “desire” will be for her husband
 - not referring to a loving desire or longing for husband
 - instead, cf. Genesis 4:7 (God speaking to Cain):

“If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. ***Its desire is for you***, but you must rule over it.” (Gen. 4:7, ESV)
 - the woman's desire will be for her husband, just as sin's desire was for Cain
 - i.e. the woman will desire to master her husband, just as sin desired to master Cain
 - the husband will “rule” over the wife
 - i.e. rule harshly, lording it over her, rather than the loving headship established at Creation
 - Hebrew word translated “rule” - usually used to describe the rule of kings, not for authority within a family

Fall (continued)

- What are the implications of the Fall/the presence of sin on mankind as male & female today?
 - the “Battle of the Sexes” - started with the Fall
 - 1) **Fractured** interpersonal relationships – conflict instead of harmony
 - Dysfunctional relationships between men & women
 - Strain in marriages (e.g. Prov. 21:9,19) → divorce
 - Rise of ‘false intimacy’ – pre/extra-marital sex; sexual immorality
 - 2) **“Difference”** in personhood and worth - man’s harsh rule over woman
 - Discrimination against women (e.g. less pay for same work)
 - “Male chauvinism” – Demeaning/degrading treatment of women by men
 - Abuse – physical and otherwise
 - Misogyny (hatred of women)
 - 3) **“Equality”** in function and authority - woman’s desire to master man
 - Feminism – drive towards removal of all role distinctions between male and female in all spheres of life, including church & home life
 - Progression to removal of anything distinctly masculine (including references to God as Father in the Bible)
 - “Reverse discrimination” against males
 - “Female chauvinism” (?) and misandry (hatred of men)
 - Passivity in men – unwilling/don’t care to lead
- Blurring of distinctions between male and female, not just in function but in substance
 - Growing acceptance of homosexuality as an acceptable alternative lifestyle
- Breakdown of marriages
 - Fractured relationships
 - Rise of infidelity, sexual impurity
 - Divorce
- Much instruction/law in the Bible has to do with regulating/counteracting effects of the Fall in male-female relationships (e.g. laws about divorce, sexual immorality)
 - Beneficial both to believers & non-believers, since rooted in Creation

Redemption

- What are the implications of Christ's redemption on mankind as male & female?
 - Redemption in Christ reaffirms God's purposes/design in Creation

“The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8)
 - Those who are in Christ are a new creation, renewed in the image of God

“and [you have] put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.” (Colossians 3:10)
 - We are therefore to “put off” what belongs to the old (fallen) nature – e.g. “sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires...” (Col. 1:5) – and put on the new
- Men & women in Christ should strive to reflect God's design for male & female
 - ***Harmonious interpersonal relationships***
 - e.g. Colossians 3:18-19; 1 Timothy 5:2; Titus 2:16; 1 Peter 3:1-7
 - relationships rooted in love, mutual respect & honor
 - ***Equality in personhood and worth***
 - e.g. Galatians 3:26-29; 1 Peter 3:7
 - no place for chauvinism, abuse, etc.
 - ***Difference (complementarity) in function and authority***
 - e.g. Ephesians 5:22-33; 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, 14:26-38
 - In Christ, man and woman are equal but different, with different functions & authority in the home and in the Church
 - ***Marriage relationships that reflect God's intent***
 - Exclusivity (e.g. Matthew 19:4-9)
 - Fidelity (e.g. Matthew 19:4-9)
 - Intimacy (e.g. 1 Corinthians 7:1-5; Ephesians 5:25-33)
 - Purity (e.g. Hebrews 13:4)
 - Partnership (e.g. 1 Timothy 3:11; Titus 2:4-5; 1 Peter 3:7)

Redemption (continued)

- How does this work out practically today?
 - Some basics...
 - Know what God's Word says about men & women, and submit to its authority in your life (i.e. the authority of Scripture)
 - Let God's Word shape your thoughts, attitudes, and behavior, not the attitudes and opinions of the world
 - Unfortunately, manhood & womanhood is a key area in which the authority of Scripture is being actively undermined among evangelicals today

“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but **be transformed by the renewing of your mind.**” (Romans 12:2a)

“and [you have] put on the new self, which is **being renewed in knowledge** in the image of its Creator.” (Colossians 3:10)

 - Jesus Christ is our reference point and our standard
 - Both men and women need to grow in Christ-likeness in all areas of our lives
 - For men,
 - Follow Christ's example of exercising loving, servant leadership, both in the home and in the Church (Eph. 5:25-33)
 - Follow Christ's example of love, respect, integrity, and purity in His dealings with women
 - For women,
 - Develop a gentle and quiet (submissive) spirit that mirrors Christ's submission to God the Father (e.g. 1 Pet. 2:21-3:6)
 - Wives, submit to your husbands as to Christ (Eph. 5:22-24), just as Christ does to God the Father (e.g. 1 Cor. 11:3)

Redemption (continued)

- How does this work out practically today?
 - Some basics...
 - Be aware of the tension between the “now” and the “not yet”
 - We have been made new, but not yet fully perfected
 - We continue to struggle with the sinful nature and continue to live in a fallen world
 - Don't underestimate the pull of the sinful nature
 - The need to exercise wisdom – some things may not be sinful, but they may not be wise
 - Ask God for wisdom
 - Learn wisdom from God's Word (e.g. Proverbs!)
 - Seek wise counsel

Some practical implications & applications

1) Dating & courtship relationships

- Reflecting God's image
 - e.g. relationship rooted in love (in the true sense of the word), mutual respect & honor
 - “What can I give?” more than “What can I get?”
 - Treating one another with appropriate honor and respect
 - e.g. not defrauding one another (e.g. leading someone on by dating with no intention towards marriage)
 - e.g. protecting one another's purity
- Living out God's design
 - Dating and courtship as preparation towards marriage
 - developing patterns of thinking and life that carry over into marriage
 - Men - practice loving, Christ-like leadership
 - Develop Christ-like character in your life
 - Initiate – as Christ came to seek His Bride
 - Learn to put her needs & interests before your own
 - Feed and care for her, not just physically, but spiritually
 - Protect her, not just physically, but spiritually
 - Don't get into a dating relationship if you are not ready to lead
 - Women – practice gracious submission
 - Develop Christ-like character in your life
 - Practice submission to God
 - Develop a gentle & quiet (submissive) spirit towards your boyfriend/fiancé
 - Encourage him to lead
 - Don't get into a dating relationship with someone you don't respect or that you couldn't see yourself submitting to (i.e. if you ultimately get married)
 - Practice exclusivity, fidelity, purity, partnership

Some practical implications & applications

1) Dating & courtship relationships (continued)

- Be aware of the tension between the “now” and the “not yet”
 - Be wise about the effects of the fall on relationships between men and women
 - DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE!!!!!!!
 - Some things are not sinful, but are perhaps not wise and may lead to sin
 - e.g. intimacy – needs to be appropriate to stage of relationship
 - sharing deepest thoughts/longings of heart early in a relationship – may not be sinful, but probably not wise → may result in heightened/asymmetric expectations that may not ultimately be met
 - spending a lot of time alone with someone of the opposite sex – again, not necessarily sinful, but probably not wise → may mislead & result in heightened/asymmetric expectations; also, potential for sexual temptation
 - physical intimacy (holding hands, kissing) → may stir desires that cannot be legitimately satisfied until marriage
 - seek wise counsel and accountability

Summary

God's perfect design for Man as male and female is seen in Creation, but was distorted by the Fall

- God's design for Man as male and female shows God's image in:
 - 1) **Harmonious** interpersonal relationships
 - 2) **Equality** in personhood and worth
 - 3) **Difference** (complementarity) in function and authority

- This design was distorted by the Fall → the Battle of the Sexes
 - 1) **Fractured** interpersonal relationships
 - 2) "**Difference**" in personhood and worth
 - 3) "**Equality**" in function and authority

- Redemption in Christ reaffirms God's purposes/design in Creation

"At some juncture, churches have to decide whether they will, by God's grace, try to live in submission to Scripture, or try to domesticate Scripture."

[D.A. Carson, *Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), p.164.]

Some useful resources:

-Boundless (www.boundless.org) – an online magazine for Christian singles & young adults

-Council for Biblical Manhood & Womanhood (www.cbmw.org) – useful articles, sermons & other resources on Biblical manhood & womanhood