

Men and Women: Who Are We? (Part 1)

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My topic over the next five days will be revolving around biblical manhood and biblical womanhood. Marriage, singleness, manhood, womanhood, raising children. And I thought before I began to think about those subjects that I might tell you a little bit about me. Not to put the focus on me, but because really I think the Lord commands us to do this. He tells us to remember that we were once dead in trespasses and sins, and now we've been made alive. And He actually commands in Ephesians 2 that we remember that we were once alienated from God, and how we have been brought near. And then Paul models that for us in 1 Timothy 1, and he actually spells out his own testimony of how he was even a persecutor of the church, and though he was once a persecutor of the church, God gave him mercy, so that he might become saved and a minister of the Gospel.

And so, I can't help but think it's a total miracle that I'm here. I am a total product of the early 1970's in which I was born. Some of you are like, ok, I can't listen anymore. But, I was born and my parents were both studying psychology at university, and so I called my parents Pam and Tim when I was first born. And then I got a fever and I began to have hallucinations, and I began to call for my mom. And she came to me. I have a deeply maternal mom. She's a wonderful woman, but she came to me and began to care for me and I said, "Well, you're not my mom. You're Pam." And that ended right there. That was the last time she ever had me call her Pam. Again, so you see, how these lies that pervert biblical manhood and womanhood get rid of gender roles: mom, dad - just be Pam and Tim. The truth always though bursts out from it, right? Every mom doesn't want her child calling her Pam when he's got a fever.

As I grew up, first of all, I went on like that, but then was just a product of the culture that really leaves children alone, and was involved in sexual experimentation when I was 8 or 9 years old because there was no one watching; no one looking. I can't remember a time when I wasn't exposed to pornography from just the earliest of ages - really from before I had hit puberty, pornography was a reality, and I'm that generation that just missed the Internet being part of my teen years and college years. And it's even a harder battle for many who are here today. But I don't remember a time not being exposed to some sort of sexual perversion. My parents are divorced. Multiple adulteries is part of the cause of that. And so the breakdown of manhood and womanhood affected me there again.

I dropped out of high school when I was 16 or 17 years old. I left home when I was 17 and moved in with my best friend's mom and her partner - these lesbian witches who were into white magic which seemed harmless to me. And that's where I spent my time when I was 17, 18 years old. I was immersed into promiscuity and all kinds of sexual immorality. I eventually left these smaller cities of Western Canada where I grew up and went to the big city of Vancouver. And it was really, for me, a prodigal son year. And I became involved in all kinds of debauchery to the point where I was basically living under a porch - renting the underneath of a porch - to live on. And just absolutely depressed. I would walk 100 blocks a day. I felt more normal on drugs than I did sober. I remember putting my name in the paper as a kid to support

homosexual rights. And you name it in terms of the effects of sexual perversion, they've affected my life.

And they've affected your life as well. Maybe not in some of those ways, but it's just simply not possible to escape what I'm describing at some level, whether it's a cousin who's into this or my son who was exposed to that. The sexual dementia that has really affected this culture touches everyone.

Anyway, what I was trying to get at though is that then when I turned 21, I moved to a small town and my step-mom started witnessing to me, and I said there's no absolute truth, and she said are you absolutely right about that? And then I said there's no right and wrong. And she said do you think you're right about that? And I began to read the book of Ecclesiastes. I knew the Bible. I have three uncles who are ministers. I grew up a little bit in church. I knew the Bible a little bit. I found the book of the Bible I didn't know the most. It was the book of Ecclesiastes. And their sexuality had a part there too. Solomon was saying he had had women, but vanity, vanity, all is vanity. And I thought, that's me. All was vanity. I've had all those pleasures and it's all meaningless, meaningless. All is meaningless and searching after wind.

And then I read the Proverbs. I was not convinced the Bible was true. And as I read the book of Proverbs, and it began to warn against the immoral woman. Here's sexuality again. It began to warn against the immoral woman. I thought to myself, the Jews were wise. So I didn't think the Bible was true, but the Jews now were up there with the Buddhists and the Hindus in my mind, in terms of being a wise ancient religion. And then I began to read the minor prophets, and hear them rail against sin and this idea that the Bible is the opioid of the masses just didn't square with what I was actually reading in the Scriptures.

And then I began to read the Sermon on the Mount. And what did Jesus say? He said if you even lust after a woman - there is sexuality and biblical manhood and womanhood again - if you even lust for a woman, you've committed adultery. And all of a sudden, it wasn't just about the Jews being wise, but it was about my sin. And the Lord began to convict me. And I got ahold of a book of apologetics. I began to read through it. On the back of this apologetics book, there was this testimony saying within 40 minutes of reading this book, I became a Christian, and I actually cursed and said I know that's exactly what's going to happen to me. And so I read for 20 minutes and went outside and gave my life to the Lord.

I'm married. I have four kids. And I'm a Baptist pastor. I don't know how this happened. God intervenes. He comes in and He changes lives. We think, oh, the culture's so hard. My friends are so hard. They don't seem affected by their sin. They don't care about biblical manhood. That can't ever work in this generation. All of that - we need to sing that hymn: we stand against the devil's lies. That's all lies. That's all lies. The Word of God is living and active and powerful, and it's absolutely able to break through into any human heart - the most sheltered, secluded, home-schooled, cared for heart, and the most debauched and debased and out on the streets and exposed to everything hearts are equally dead before they're born again and equally made alive when the grace of God comes home through the cross of Jesus Christ. And He changes people. And so when we talk about biblical manhood and womanhood, what we're talking about is we're talking about the idol of this culture.

Ok? We could get up and give a scholarly lecture this evening on Buddhism, and that would be valuable to some degree. Or, a scholarly lecture on Hinduism to some degree. And

there's increasing numbers of Buddhists and Hindus in North America. But if you want to know the real idolatrous religion of this culture, it is not Buddhism; it is not Hinduism; it is a constant lustful craving after sexual immorality, that people are willing to kill 50 million babies to support their sexual immorality since 1973. They are willing to slaughter their marriages to have adulterous relationships. They are willing to get online and just run their credit card bills up to engage in sexual immorality online. They are willing to abuse children. Fathers in this country and others are willing to leave their daughters unprotected so they wind up in the sex trade all over the world.

We were in Moldova this year and listening to this: More women and men have been sold into sex trafficking in Moldova than people died in the Afghan War. All of that revolves around what? The sin of sexual immorality. The sin of not understanding what a godly man is and not what a godly woman is. The breakdown of the family. You could spend all night thinking about these things. It's my belief that when we preach the Gospel, and we think about the Gospel, we have to think about it as it relates not to sin in general - that's important - but to sin as it touches our lives. To the sins that we are locked in.

Listen to John the Baptist in Luke 3. How did he preach? Did he walk around saying, there's sin in general. We need to repent of sin in general. No, he went right for the jugular of his day, which was - you who are hoarding, quit hoarding. He said you who are extorting, quit extorting. And you who are collecting too much taxes, quit that. He went right for what was happening in this day and what was happening were those things. What's happening in our day is a complete abandonment of God's call on our lives to be men like Jesus, to be women with the character of Jesus who reflect the church, and to be people who reflect the glory of God in every area of our lives instead of pursuing whatever lust strikes our fancy at that moment. And so I want to speak to you about biblical manhood and womanhood in these days.

These things all affect us. All of us have uncles and bosses and husbands and fathers, and these men affect us as men. And each of us have sisters and mothers and grandmothers and aunts and wives and these women affect us as women. And learning how to live out what God has called us to in our roles that God has given us is vital to reflecting the Gospel in our lives.

So where do you start? Where on earth do you start? Do you start with singleness? That's where we start when we're born. We start single. Or do you start with marriage? That's where many of us wind up is married. Do we start with teaching on child raising? That's how you get at kids the earliest and get to do some preventative maintenance, Lord willing. Do you start with manhood? We know men are to lead. Do you start with womanhood? Each of us started from a woman Paul says. Where do you start? Someone said creation - that's exactly right. We need to start with creation. Right answer.

What I want to do is back right up to: who are we? Before you get into the details, the question is who are we? Just as people made in the image of God and made with genders; made as male and made as female - who are we?

So I just want to make four simple points this evening. We were created by God male and female. Second point is going to be: We were created different as male and female with different roles. Third, we fell into sin and were cursed as male and female in our original roles. And lastly, in Jesus, we are being recreated into those original roles and better.

Let me begin by reading to you from Genesis 1. And maybe if you have a copy of the Scriptures, you can open there. Genesis 1:24-28. This is the account of how God made the world. And on the sixth day, He made man. We read this, v. 24. "And God said, Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds, livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds,' and it was so. And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind and God saw that it was good. Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' So God created man in His own image; in the image of God, He created him; male and female He created them, and God blessed them and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'"

Now I want you to look, if you would, at Genesis 2 where the biblical story now zooms in and focuses in on that creation of that first couple. We get a broad panorama in Genesis 1, but now we zoom in and we focus in on the creation of the first man and the first woman in Genesis 2. And I'll begin reading in v. 15. "The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it, and the Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die.' Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good that man should be alone. I will make him a helper fit for him.' Now out of the ground, the Lord God had 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 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, 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 brought her to the man. Then the man said, 'This at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall 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."

And so we've seen in Genesis 1, the creation of man and woman. They were made to have dominion over the earth. They were made in God's image. Now, in Genesis 2, we focus in and see that it's not good for man to be alone. But Eve is made as a helper for him. And now I want you to look if you will at Genesis 3 where their marriage and all humanity along with them fall into sin and misery. And I want to read to you from beginning at the cursing of the woman. "To the woman he said, 'I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing. In pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband and he shall rule over you.' And to Adam, He said, 'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, you shall not eat of it, cursed is the ground because of you. In pain, you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you

shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face, you shall eat bread till you return to the ground. For out of it you were taken. For you are dust and to dust you shall return."

The first point I want to make this evening is that we were created by God male and female. And I want you to notice my first point is not Christians believe we were made male and female. It's not that Christians believe it. It's that it's true. Every perversion we're going to notice over these coming days is not a perversion from the Christian worldview. It's rebellion against God who is there. It's that you can't live in another world other than God's world. And so when you rebel in God's world, it always twists what He made good. And we were created by God male and female. Genesis 1 gives us the most amazing view of humanity that you can ever have. It shows us that we were created by God. And not only were we created by God, but we were personally created by God. Notice in v. 24 that the animals come up out of the ground. And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kind." Some of you have read C. S. Lewis' "The Magician's Nephew," and seen the animals burrowing up out of the ground. And of course, Lewis got the idea from Genesis. But notice that the creation of man and woman is different than the creation of the animals. We don't just pop up out of the ground. We are personally made by God. He says in v. 24 let the earth do that. In v. 26 He says, "Let us make man in our image." Listen to this, every single human being who has ever lived was God's personal handiwork. Psalm 139:14 says that each person is fearfully and wonderfully made, knitted together in their mother's womb.

In my family, we have lots of blankets. We never have any shortage of blankets. We have a chest full of blankets. It's always wrecking the hinges because the blankets push the lid open. There's lots of blankets. But there's only a few that my mom quilted. And those ones are the most special in the house. Because my mother made them for each of her grandchildren. And you, even if you don't like your body type, even if you wish you had your body type from 10 years ago, you were knitted just the way you are by a personal God who was personally active in the formation of you in the womb. You were made by God. And unbelievably, we are the pinnacle of God's creation.

In Genesis 1, God creates the light, the greater light, the lesser light, the plants, the stars, the fish, the birds, the animals of the ground, and of all of it, He says it's good. It's good. It's good. But when He makes man, He says, it's very good now. The pinnacle of creation is now on the scene. People go to see whales in SeaWorld. They go to see mountains. But the most glorious thing on the planet is right in front of me in the dozens. People. One preacher pointed out, no engineer could design these things, that have a coiling motion and a grasping strength, and a coordination. And you have one on the end of each arm. That's amazing! That's God's good gift to you. You are God's good gift to you. And really ultimately to Himself.

We are by virtue of creation; by virtue of what God did, the pinnacle of creation. And we are the creation - this is important - we are the creation of a Triune relational God. It says in Genesis 1:26, "Let us make man in our image." Now, someone would say that's not a reference to the Trinity. God's just speaking to the angels. Well, let me tell you this, when God looks at the angels, he doesn't see ones that were made in His image. So He can't say to the angels, "Let us make man in our image." The only person - the only people - in all eternity that God can say that to is God the Father can say that to God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, so we have here even a hinting of what will become abundantly clear in the New Testament, that God is a triune God.

Why can't Allah be true? Because Allah is not a relational being. Allah is alone and lonely and the best he can do is offer you celestial virgins in paradise. That's the best he can do. It's all he's got. He doesn't have anything - he's just a demon. He's false. Fake. But the lie of Allah never would account for this world. Because if there was an alone god - all alone forever - he wouldn't make relational beings like you.

You were made in the image of a relational being. Why do you like people so much? Or why do you struggle with people so much? It's either because you're embracing what God loves or rejecting it. But you can't avoid it. You were made in the image of a God who has never known a millisecond outside the context of a relationship. He has always been one God in three Persons: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And we are made in His image.

Now, you think about that. And people in our day and age would say that sounds like mythology - just some god saying let there be light and there was light. We need something much more rational like there was a ball of matter all compressed and alone in the universe. And then suddenly it blew up and it splattered out all across the infinite whatever, and one of those places had a really good puddle, really conducive to lightning striking it, and life coming out of it, and then you know the amoebas came out of the water, and then from them the fish, and then they grew legs, and then you've got the monkeys, and here we are. Made in the image of? Nothing. An accident. Made in the image of an accident. You better treat me with respect. The world wants dignity. The world wants esteem. The world wants meaning. And they've embraced a lie for a worldview that will give them no foundation for the very thing they know they need, which is what it is to be lost. To be lost is to know there's somewhere to go and to know that you're not there. And the world is lost. Getting little glimmers of truth and covering them up with all kinds of lies. But we as believers, and those of you that are believers, there ought to be a dignity about you. There ought to be a dignity about me, just from this one fact. That we were made in the image of God.

It's amazing how quickly this can change. Before I was a Christian, I always walked around like this. And my hair was usually hanging in front of my face. And one time, just a few weeks after I became a believer, my dad said, "Stand up. You were made in the image of God." Isn't that amazing? Just one truth. Just stand up. You're not a worthless descendent. You're not a bag of chemicals just bouncing around on each other; just having chemical reactions that make you depressed one day and happy the next. You are made in the image of God.

But notice this, male and female, He created them. The image of God was not portrayed in one sex. Male and female, He created them. So look at that. V. 27. So God created man (singular) in His own image. In the image of God, He created him. Male and female, He created them. The world has always struggled with what to do with women. Always. And the world either paints women as these pure angels, or it paints women as immoral and ungodly. Or, it devalues women. One person said recently, the most dangerous words in the world right now are: it's a girl. Because as soon as they find out it's a girl, you're way more likely to be aborted in China, in India. The world devalues women. Devalues them utterly. It says you can be the CEO of a major company as long as you don't mind that we strip you half-naked and put you on the front of a magazine to rape with our eyes. Just degrades women everywhere. And the Bible alone comes along and says utter equal value. And not just equal to man, in the image of God. That's what a woman is. There's no greater foundation. And sisters are constantly struggling with perceptions

of themselves and depression over themselves and self-hatred and self-loathing over themselves. And you need to know this: No matter how far you sink in sin, you cannot erase this about you. You were made in the image of God. It's amazing. In the image of God, He created them.

Now in the ancient Near East, where the book of Genesis was written, the way you marked off your land was you put a statue of you in your land, so think sphinx in Egypt. How do you know Pharaoh's in charge? He puts a sphinx there and says this here is mine. You want a more modern example? Saddam Hussein. What was all over Iraq? Big statues of Saddam Hussein. They say Saddam's in charge here. Well, what was God doing putting people in His image and saying cover the planet? Saying "this is Mine." Which means that what you are, at the very fabric of your being, is you are the best medium, the best canvas possible to display the glory of God.

I don't know about you, I don't go to art galleries a lot, but when I do go to art galleries, what I notice is that there's those little white tags under the picture, and that's your only hope of making sense of what's on the wall. And so you read that and it says there, "fire." "Mixed medium." "Pottery." "Bronze." "Oil on canvas." "Pastels on paper." It tells you what the artist used to display the idea that was in their soul.

Well, when God wanted to stretch out the perfect canvas to display His glory, He did not use pastels; He did not use paint; He did not use a canvas at all. He said I want five fingers and I want five toes and I want two ears and I want two eyes. I want a mind. I want a chest. I want legs. That's where I'm going to paint a picture of Me. You say, wait a second! Can my person really be the best place to display the glory of God? You bet it is and that's why Jesus came as a man. And He is the image of the invisible God. The exact - the exact representation of His nature.

To be a person is to be the kind of being it would take to display the glory of God. What does that mean? What does that mean to be made in the image of God? Are you beginning to get a little bit of a taste of what it is to be human? Sometimes we go through life assuming the basics. We say we want to see people saved, and we never think: what is a people? We want to see men saved. What are men? We want to see souls saved. What's a soul? And as soon as you start to think about what a soul is, then you even more want to say I want to see people saved. These people are made in the image of God.

What is the image of God? Well, it's what we do and it's how we're made. It's two things. It's what we do - that's our function. And it's how we're made - that's our structure. Both of those are key to understanding what it is to be made in the image of God. What do I mean by that? Well, think about the way you're made. You're made with a mind. Which is why God can say to you, "Come, let us reason together." He has a mind and you have a mind. You're made in His image. There's a correspondence between you and Him. He can make moral distinctions. He says it is good, it is good, it is very good. He says some things are not good. And you walk through life just involuntarily making those kind of distinctions all the time. We're able to make these moral distinctions. It's what it is to be made in the image of God is to notice what's good and what's not good. And to notice what's right and what's wrong. To be made in the image of God is to be able to act. There's a big difference here. He gets to act without hands. He says

"Red Sea part," and it parts. We have to build Hoover Dam. But nonetheless, in doing so, we are displaying the image of God.

I was flying above Missouri in a Cessna today. It was just a great gift to be able to fly at a low altitude and just to be able to look out over God's creation. God is able to be in all places at all times, but He's given us the ability to walk and to run and to build cars and to build airplanes and to move. He's the God who acts and we are people who act. Being in the image of God is right into our structure. It's how we're made.

But it's not just how we're made. It's what we're called to do. What does He call Adam and Eve to do? Go have dominion and subdue the earth. So what does it take to subdue the earth? You've got to have a mind. You've got to know what's right. And you've got to be able to act. And so He makes man and woman equally able to reflect Him and to be a display of His glory.

Second point. We were both created in the image of God, male and female. The second point is we were both created in the image of God, male and female with different roles. Now this is a mystery. We were both made totally equal in the image of God for something different. And if you want to unravel the mystery of how you can be equal and for something different you need go no further than the Trinity. That's where we get the unity of the one and the many. That's how we can understand how someone can be utterly equal and yet in a different place. The Son - totally equal with the Father. Totally willing to submit to the Father. The Holy Spirit - totally equal to the Son. Wants nothing more than to glorify the Son. And we are totally equal - male and female, brothers and sisters in creation and for those who are Christians, in the Lord. And yet with different roles.

Now in Genesis 2, we see this, but we have to be careful that we know how to read Genesis 2. Because Genesis 2 does not talk like Romans. People like Romans because Romans just comes out and says it. Romans will say: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Genesis 2 will just tell you stories about really sinful people. Or, Romans 6 will say, the wages of sin is death. Genesis 5 will just tell you: "and he died, and he died, and he died..." So the book of Genesis and the book of Romans are both written by God; both inspired by the Holy Spirit; and yet, one makes its teachings in a teaching way, a didactic way; the other teaches in a narrative way through story. And you've got to learn how to read story. And when you learn how to read story, the points of different roles begin to come out real easily.

The first way that we see role in Genesis is that men were created first. Men were created first. How do you know men have a different role? How do you know they're called to lead? It's because they were created first. Genesis 2:15 "The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it, and the Lord commanded the man saying, 'You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die.'" Adam is all alone and he has a place to be. He has a place to work and keep. He has the Word of God. He has the promise of God. All when he's utterly alone. And the fact that he comes on the scene first means that he is called to lead. You say, wait a second, you're reading into the text. Well, I'm not reading into the text, because it's just what Paul says in 1 Timothy 2:13. 1 Timothy 2:13.

In 1 Timothy 2:13, Paul speaking about the context of the church says, "I do not (v. 12) permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man. Rather she is to remain quiet." Why?

Why? Why this order? Well, because of the culture in Ephesus. It just demanded that. That's the argument for why you would ignore this verse. But that's not the reason Paul gives. What Paul says is, "For Adam was formed first, then Eve." This order of leadership is not because he's smarter. It's not because of the culture in Ephesus. It's because of the order of creation. That he was formed first. And Paul understood that to mean he was called to lead. Now, it goes on and makes this in more ways too.

In the ancient Near East, and really in our own day today, to name someone was a sign of authority. I mean, when my firstborn daughter was named, I named her Jordana. I didn't wait till she was 10 and say, well, what do you want? And if she came to me and said at 15, and told me she wanted a different name, I would tell her she wasn't getting another name, because I gave her her name. I'm her father and I have authority over her. For her to reject the name I gave her would be a rejection of authority.

And in the book of Genesis, what do we find? We find Adam naming the animals. He determines what their names will be. And then twice it's pointed out to us that he names Eve. Specifically we can see that in Genesis 3:20. "The man called his wife's name Eve because she was the mother of all living." So he was created first, and then he is also given the ability to name, and he names his wife, which was a sign of authority. And then also, when the serpent deceived Eve, where did God go? He went to the man.

The book of Genesis - fascinating is too light a word - but it's really quite amazing. The order of creation was to be God, man, woman, animals. And in the fall, the animal leads the woman over the man over God. But they might have invented their own world, but they were still in God's world, and when they sinned, He came for the man. Do you see what I was saying earlier? You can be in rebellion against God's world, but you're still in God's world while you're in your rebellion. And He came for man. He came to talk to Adam when Eve fell into sin. And Adam blame-shifted and said, "This woman You gave me." But God didn't take that. Adam is a leader because he was created first. He's a leader because he was given authority to name. And he was given accountability (Genesis 3:9). When sin came into the world, Adam was held accountable. He should lead.

What we see about Eve - now this is key - she is actually created to be a helper. She's created to be a helper. Genesis 2:18 "It is not good that a man should be alone. I will make a helper fit for him." Now, this is amazing. Listen to those words. We hear the word "helper," and it demeans women in our eyes. Helper? It's like "junior varsity." This is demeaning. But we don't listen. A helper fit for him. Who's he? He is made in the image of God. He is the ultimate creation on the planet. And it's going to take somebody special to help him. It's not a position of being demeaned. If someone called you - and forget the current president and your feelings about him - but if someone called you and said you are going to be the helper to the president, you would not feel demeaned. Right? I didn't think so. And God proves this by parading every animal on earth in front of Adam and none of them are good enough. "Now out of the ground the Lord God had 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 (here's those three words again) a helper fit for him." There's no helper fit for him. You can take a dog for a walk. You can ride a horse at a

gallop. A monkey can get your bananas out of the tree, if you're in Eden, but a monkey doesn't have a mind to fellowship with. Can't make the same moral judgments: good, very good, not good. Can't act and do with the same dexterity and the same mental control as a man. There's only one creature on the planet that can fellowship with a man, and that's a woman. There's only one creature that can help a man, and that is a woman. We'll probably get into this more tomorrow, but this idea that helper is demeaning, we need to do away with this completely. In the Bible, God is called a Helper. The Holy Spirit is called a Helper. And the Lord Jesus Christ is called a Helper. None of them are feeling demeaned. But at the same time, we don't want to get rid of this idea. She really is called to help.

They tease me at the church I pastor because I've had every job there is to have. I was a carpenter's helper, an electrician's helper. I've been a welder's helper. And just helped everybody. And when I helped them, it was very clear they were to lead, and I was to follow. They couldn't do their work without me, but my work was not to do their work. They were called to lead. I was called to follow.

Now some of us get scared of this teaching. Man's called to lead. Woman's called to be a helper. It all sounds good in the church, but when you go talk about it out there, it makes people a little more nervous. But you need to be careful. If this teaching that man is called to lead and a woman is called to help does not attract you or seems foolish to the eyes of the world, let me ask you this. What else seems foolish to the eyes of the world? Jesus Christ died to save sinners seems foolish to the world. You don't go to the world for your ideas of what is foolish. They'd get rid of your Savior too. Not just get rid of the Bible's gender roles.

Third point. We fell into sin and were cursed as male and female in our original roles. Now this is key. This helped my wife and I in marriage a great deal. It's helped me at least. Lots of other things have helped her. I didn't mean it like that. Sorry, honey. It's helped me immensely in marriage to notice that the curse put on Adam and Eve for their sin is not a generic curse. It's not just like you're generally cursed. Life's going to be hard. It's a specific curse that touches their gender roles. So Genesis 3:16, "To the woman He said, 'I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing. In pain you shall bring forth children.'" So, it's not just pain in general. It's pain as related to her role of being the mother of all living. And then in Genesis 3:18, it's not just difficulty in general, it's that Adam will have difficulty with work and providing. Halfway through v. 17, "Cursed is the ground because of you. In pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the plants of the field." So, very specific curses.

But I want you to notice one part of the curse that specifically touches the way we relate to one another as male and female. Notice v. 16. God says to the woman, "Your desire shall be for your husband." Now this is a curse, so what is the curse? Is it: "I curse you and you will really, really want your husband?" I don't think that's what is being said here. If you look at Genesis 4:7, we get the same word: desire. Now we're in the context of Cain and Abel and the first murder in the world. And God says to Cain, "If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. It's (same word) desire is for you, but you must rule over it." Sin's desire is to rule over you, Cain. It wants to rule over you. What's it saying in Genesis 3:16 of the woman? "Your desire shall be for your husband." No longer will you be content being a helper. No longer will you be content submitting. Why is it so hard for me to

submit? It's because I was born in this feminist culture. No, it's not. It goes way deeper than that. The reason it's so hard to submit is because we were cursed with an unsubmitive spirit - women specifically. We're cursed with a desire to be in charge where they were once called to submit. But then you go on and it says, "And he shall rule over you." And this word "rule" according to Wayne Grudem is not a shepherding, a loving rule; it's that he's going to be a harsh ruler. So you've got the battles of the sexes born in Genesis 3. She's going to want to rule, and he's not going to rule in a loving shepherding Christ-like way. They both want to be in charge. She's not supposed to be in charge. And he's not supposed to be in charge like that. But he's in charge like that, and she's trying to be in charge, and they can't get along. And they get divorced, and he starts looking at pornography, and she starts reading romance novels. And it goes downhill from there. That's the way we've been cursed.

You need to know that if you can't overcome a harshness towards your wife, it's because you are in Adam and you need to be born again. You're under a curse. And you need to know that if you're a Christian and it's a struggle to be kind, to be loving, it's because the flesh is strong. You need to grow in the Spirit. And you need to know that if you're a woman that has trouble submitting, trouble coming up under, and you can never do it - you can never bring yourself to submit at all - you need to be born again. You need a new heart within you. One that loves what God loves. But if you're a Christian that struggles to submit, you need to know you're not alone. It's not some accident. This is what it means to be bent in the flesh.

And this really ought to create a lot of compassion towards married people in marriage right? Why does my husband have such a hard time being nice? He's nice to everyone out in the world. Why does he have such a hard time with me? It ought to create compassion towards your husband. In Adam, he's under a curse. And towards your wives - there ought to be compassion towards your wives. Why is it such a struggle? It is because she's so particularly bad? No, it's because we're all so particularly bad. And there ought to be compassion in marriage towards the struggles that we all bear in the infirmity of the flesh.

Now, here's my last point. And I think it's glorious. In Jesus, we are being recreated into those original roles. Every time I ask the women of the congregation, they all know. What's the one thing Paul has to say to you in the New Testament? He just keeps saying it doesn't he? Every chance he gets. Ephesians 5, Colossians 3, 1 Peter 3, Titus 2. Submit to your husband. We look at that and we're like why? Why not, "don't lie to your husband?" Or, "be forgiving to your husband." Why always submit? Because in Jesus Christ, the fall is being undone. Paul knew his Bible. Paul wasn't just picking one random command. Paul wasn't just jumping around. He was like ok, listen, when man fell into sin, it touched women in a particular way. It made them want to rule over their husband, and their desire was to conquer him. And now in Jesus, they've been made new. They've been given new hearts. They've got the law written on their heart. They want to bow their knees to Jesus. They have a submissive spirit in them. And now he touches where it's the most hard and he says do it there. Submit to your husbands as is fitting in the Lord. Why is it fitting in the Lord? Because Jesus is making all things right. Because Jesus is bringing all things into union with Himself. Which means He's taking all the ways you're disjointed from Him, and He's setting you straight with Him, and that means restoring that submissive spirit that wants to affirm not all male leadership, but godly male leadership and sometimes in a suffering context (1 Peter 3) ungodly male leadership.

But men, have you noticed? He does the same thing with us. It's always the same thing. Husbands, love your wives. I mean if only he had just said, do your duty for your wives. We'd all be fine, right? But wives have got this sixth sense that knows the difference between duty and love like nobody else, right? Husbands, love your wives. Colossians: Husbands love your wives and do not be harsh with them. 1 Peter 3: Dwell with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the weaker vessel.

Why the same thing? Because this is where men struggle. Men are not naturally nice to their wives. They're naturally nice to the girls they're courting. But then they get married to them, and the battle with the flesh begins in earnest. And the Spirit of God is not interested in sanctifying a people in general. He does not sanctify a people in the abstract. He sanctifies a people in the particulars of who they are; in the particulars of their gender, in the particulars of their sexuality, and he says: "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly." Get the Gospel in you richly. Let the Word of Christ that says you're forgiven, you are atoned for, you are redeemed, you are loved, you are a child of God, you have His Holy Spirit - let that dwell in you richly, singing to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Get that in you and then what? Wives, submit to your husbands as is fitting in the Lord. And husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. The Spirit of God is redeeming us through the blood of Jesus in our genders and in the relationships that those genders bring us into. Which means the church is not for Sundays, is it? It means that the Gospel is for Monday and Tuesday and when the baby's crying at 4 in the morning and you know you should get up, man, to go take care of the baby, but you just want to lay there and let her do it again. But the Spirit of God's touching there. Do not be harsh. Go help out. And it means that wives, it's not just that you're to submit to Jesus in general, but there's also this guy. And his ideas are never quite as wise as Jesus'. But Jesus doesn't want your submission if it ignores him. That's a false submission. To think you're submitting to Jesus while ignoring the one Jesus put over you. May God help us all.

Let's pray. Father, we praise You for Your tremendous and mighty and glorious work of redemption. Lord, that though we were yet sinners - first, made in the image of God; first, made glorious, made to display You, and then to sin in that, to glorify lust and immorality and all kinds of fantasy instead of You. And then, Lord, to have You redeem us and shed Your blood for us and forgive us. And then to call us back to what Adam and Eve fell from. And to give us Your Holy Spirit to do it. Lord, I pray You'd do these things in Jesus' name, Amen.