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# GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND THE GOSPEL

## *DYSPHORIC LIFE UNDER THE CURSE OF SIN*

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A message delivered by Pastor Marc Minter on September 25, 2016

First Baptist Church of Diana, TX

### INTRODUCTION

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When I was in Jr. high school, I was given a creative writing assignment. Generally, I don't remember much about my childhood or teen years, so it's a big deal (for me) that I remember this. My teacher asked her students to write about an individual with great personal significance. I could choose anyone I wanted, but it had to be someone of utmost importance to me. My mother was very disappointed that I opted to write about my football coach: Coach Seibert.

My mother and father divorced when I was too young to remember how it all went down, but the consequences of their divorce continued long after their decision. As a little guy, I longed for adult male interaction and affirmation, but my father (during those years) was mostly absent. I loved him, and I wanted him near, but he was gone.

Coach Seibert, on the other hand, I saw almost every day for two years. I spent at least a couple of hours each day under his supervision. Not only did I see him every day; he instructed me, he rebuked to me when I messed up, he affirmed me when I performed well, and he demanded more from me than I thought I could give. Because that man had expectations for me, I began to have expectations for myself.

I was truly saddened to learn that Coach Seibert died last year, because he had a huge impact on me. He made no distinctive effort to treat me differently than anyone else (at least none that I know of), but he was a man who taught me about what it is to be a man. He called me a man, and he demanded that I live up to it. He instilled in me much of what I experientially understand masculinity to be. I am grateful to God for the gift of Coach Seibert in my life.

Boys do not effortlessly become men; and the same is true for girls becoming women. Sure, we get older, and we are eventually able to legally drive, vote, and buy alcohol; but these are not what makes a man a man, or a woman a woman. Masculinity and Femininity are not rooted in the mere progression of time or even life experience. One should not argue that a boy becomes a man (for example) simply because he kills an animal, rebuilds a jalopy, or gives away his virginity.

These life experiences do not magically create a man, and no life experience will spontaneously produce a woman.

What, then, is manhood or womanhood? This question is controversial in our day for multiple reasons, but at the outset we must be prepared to confront the reality that terms like “man” and “woman” are themselves becoming controversial. We shall explore the ultimate cause of gender confusion and look to the Scriptures for answers to some of the most important and applicable questions we will ask in our lifetimes.

What is a man? What is a woman? How shall we live as Christ-following men and women in a culture that finds the gender binary almost as offensive as the exclusivity of the Gospel message itself?

May God help us and give us wisdom from His Word today.

## SCRIPTURE READING

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Genesis 3:1–19

3 Now **the serpent was more crafty** than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made.

**He said to the woman, “*Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’*”**

2 And the **woman said to the serpent**, “*We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, 3 but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’*”

4 But the **serpent said to the woman**, “***You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.***”

6 So when the woman saw that the tree was **good for food**, and that it was a **delight to the eyes**, and that the tree was to be **desired to make one wise**, she took of its fruit and ate, and **she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.**

7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

8 And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the **man** and **his wife** hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

9 But the **LORD God called to the man** and **said to him**, “*Where are you?*”

10 And **he said**, *“I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.”*

11 **He said**, *“Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?”*

12 The **man said**, *“The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.”*

13 Then the **LORD God said to the woman**, *“What is this that you have done?”*  
The **woman said**, *“The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”*

14 The **LORD God said to the serpent**, *“Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. 15 I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”*

16 **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.”*

17 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; 18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. 19 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.”*

## MESSAGE OUTLINE

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**(1) ‘DYSPHORIA’ DESCRIBES THE MODERN MOOD REGARDING GENDER**

**(2) GENDER DYSFUNCTION IS A RESULT OF THE FALL**

**(3) WHAT WILL WE BELIEVE & HOW SHALL WE LIVE?**

### **(1) ‘DYSPHORIA’ DESCRIBES THE MODERN MOOD REGARDING GENDER**

“*Gender Dysphoria*” is probably a new phrase to most of us. In fact, it’s a new phrase for all of us, if you consider when it was actually first used to describe “Gender Identity Disorder.” The fifth edition of the **Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders** (DSM-5), which was published in **2013** by the **American Psychiatric Association** (APA), changed the previous label “**Gender Identity Disorder**” to the current label “**Gender Dysphoria**.”

While the APA still lists **Gender Dysphoria** as a **psychiatric condition** that warrants treatment, **and** keeps it listed among many other “disorders,” **the change** of label was motivated by a desire to **remove the “stigma”** of it. In a fact sheet, released before the 2013 edition of the DSM, the APA explained that mental health researchers wanted to “**remove the connotation that the patient is ‘disordered.’**”<sup>1</sup>

How a patient can have a “**disorder**” without him or herself being “**disordered**” is difficult for me to understand, but in our hyper-tolerant culture, I am repeatedly amazed by the lengths to which many people will go to try to deny the obvious.

And yet, I think the label “Gender Dysphoria” captures the mood quite well. “**Dysphoria**” is a feeling of “**unease and dissatisfaction**,” and placing the word “Gender” with the word “Dysphoria” accurately (in my opinion) identifies the issue. Indeed, this matter is a question of “feeling,” and not a question of “being.” It is true that a person may feel as though they are something or someone other than what or who they are. It is absolutely ludicrous, however, to suggest that a person may successfully deny reality without severe consequences. Of course, many sexual revolutionaries would have us believe otherwise, but there is even great confusion among themselves.

**As a matter of fact, confusion (it seems to me) is the overarching theme of this sexual revolution we are experiencing.**

There is an all-out assault on the “**gender binary**” (the concept of two distinct genders – male and female), and the antagonists are arguing for “**gender fluidity**” (the concept of relativism applied to gender roles and characteristics).

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.dsm5.org/documents/gender%20dysphoria%20fact%20sheet.pdf>

**However, the death of the gender binary is not life-giving for anyone. It is ushering in total chaos.**

**For example**, many have proclaimed the absolute indistinguishability between males and females. “*Boys and girls are the same*,” they say, “*so they should be treated exactly the same*.” But then someone will argue that a boy should be treated like a girl if he feels that he is actually a girl.

**This is confusing...** Is there any difference between boys and girls, or isn't there? **If there is not**, then who cares what little Johnny wears to school or what pronoun “he” ...or “she” ...or “ze” wants to claim today? If there is no difference, then it makes no difference. **If**, on the other hand, **there is** a difference between girls and boys, then wouldn't we be responsible adults by encouraging little Johnny towards masculine development (regardless of his feelings)?

**Another example of the modern gender confusion is in the area of sports.** The Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) of college sports recently moved the location of some championship football games so that they would not be played in North Carolina. This move was a direct attempt to penalize North Carolinians for their position on something that has commonly become known as “*the bathroom issue*.” Not long ago, the state of North Carolina passed a bill (House Bill 2) that prevented government and public facilities from being forced to accommodate the bathroom preferences of transgendered individuals. Basically, the bill requires people to use the bathroom and changing facilities that correspond with their biological sex (male or female).

**ACC officials say this is discrimination**, but isn't this just a bit hypocritical? I mean, as far as I know, there are zero female football players in the ACC. As a matter of fact, the ACC even makes biological females and biological males play in different categories for **every** sport listed under the ACC. The ACC website segregates “Men's Sports” from “Women's Sports” without a single exception.<sup>2</sup> Basketball, tennis, soccer, lacrosse, rowing and several others are all listed in gender-specific categories. Isn't this discrimination by the ACC? Aren't they being narrow-minded and bigoted by keeping the gender binary in place with such distinctions? One can hardly imagine how the ACC could actually be consistent if they truly believed that the gender binary should be replaced with gender fluidity.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.theacc.com>

**Confusion abounds in American culture today.** With the sexual revolution, the established sexual rules (whether moral or immoral) have been completely uprooted and tossed into a massive bonfire. There are some remnants that remain, but the sexual revolutionaries are aggressively collecting and burning everything that once stood in the way of sexual autonomy.

This is the way a sinful mind tries to solve the problem of dysfunction. Male-Female relationships are dysfunctional across numerous measurements, and this dysfunction is harmful to everyone. Males and females alike are not living according to their intended design, and this creates all sorts of frustrations. People become frustrated with themselves, frustrated with others, frustrated with a broken system, and frustrated by failed solutions.

**So, if “dysphoria” means unease and dissatisfaction,** then I’d like to argue that more than just transgendered people experience “Gender Dysphoria.” A whole lot of people today are dissatisfied by our failure to live in harmony and according to our God-designed gender.

**The question we must address now is “Where did this gender dysfunction come from?”**

## **(2) GENDER DYSFUNCTION IS A RESULT OF THE FALL**

**First,** I do not want to take for granted that everyone in the room will understand what I mean by “**the Fall**” and the subsequent “**Curse of Sin.**” Let’s look to our primary passage (and also at its context in the book of Genesis) in order to better comprehend what these phrases mean.

In Genesis 1 and 2, we read about God’s creative intentionality and power. In all of creation, and especially in humanity, God displays His glory and majesty. All things find their origin in God’s design, and all things flourish when they abide under God’s good authority. But, in Genesis 3, we read about human disobedience; and we discover that there are profound consequences that came as a result of our first parents’ first sin.

“**The Fall**” refers to that scene in Genesis 3, when Adam and Eve “fell” from their status of obedient subjects to the rank of usurping rebels. The “**serpent**” (who is the devil [Rev. 12:9, 20:2]) tempted Adam and Eve with *autonomy* (self-rule or self-government). He told them that they could be the ones to know and decide for themselves between right and wrong (Gen. 3:5). His accusation was that God was withholding something from them, and they bought into the lie. The Scripture tells us that the woman saw the forbidden fruit as “**desirable**” and a “**delight to the eyes**” (Gen. 3:6); and once she indulged, she also “**gave some to her husband**” who was passively abandoning his responsibility to “**keep**” the garden that the Lord had given him (Gen. 2:15).

**This “Fall” was immediately devastating.** They showed their unwillingness to obey God’s authority, even with in the slightest regulation; and as soon as they disobeyed, they were guilt-stricken (Gen. 3:7). Their shame drove them into hiding; they were “fallen” indeed.

“**The Curse of Sin**” refers to God’s response to this human act of devastating disobedience. It is God’s “**giving up**” of humanity to all sorts of corrupting things (Rom. 1:24, 26, 28). God had warned Adam to abstain from a single tree amidst a garden of pleasurable foliage (Gen. 2:17). Upon threat of death, Adam rejected God’s warning, and then God defined what He meant when He told Adam, “**dying, you shall die**” (môt tāmût). God came to Adam and Eve; and He confronted both their sin and their desire to hide from the consequences (Gen. 3:8-13).

**God unleashed His righteous judgment upon all creation;** He cursed everyone and everything (Gen. 3:16-19). The extent of God’s curse, its far-reaching ramifications, can only be understood in greater depth as the Genesis narrative unfolds. After God’s words of condemnation and cursing, there is evidence throughout Genesis that the curse was incredibly damaging.

Beginning with Genesis 4, we read of murder, polygamy, barbaric violence, and that is before we even get to chapter 5. In Genesis 5, we read the repetitive phrase “**and he died**” that hammers home the new reality of death in God’s created world. In Genesis 6, we are confronted by God’s dreadful declaration that “**the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually**” (Gen. 6:5). This wicked evil

brought destruction upon the whole earth, and God rescued only 8 persons from His deluge of judgment.

**John MacArthur says**, “Genesis also records the beginnings of such evils as homosexuality (Genesis 19:1-5); incest (Genesis 19:30-38); idolatry (Genesis 31:30-35); rape (Genesis 34:1-2); mass murder (Genesis 34:25-29); harlotry (Genesis 38:14-19); and numerous other forms of wickedness.”

**Genesis** (and really all of Scripture) **shows the reader that the Curse of Sin is crushing and comprehensive.**

**Thanks be to God** that His curse upon humanity and all of creation came **only after** He promised a redeeming Savior who would come to rescue fallen humans (Gen. 3:15). If it were not for this gracious promise, and God’s working to fulfill it, then there would be no reason to hope for any escape from the “Curse of Sin.”

Looking back at Genesis 3, God’s specific words in the Curse (and the persons to whom He spoke them) are important for our discussion here. From Genesis chapter 3 (especially verse 16) we can learn much about why we experience **Gender Dysfunction** in this dysphoric life under the Curse of Sin.

**(Quickly) Before I explain what the Bible says about Gender Dysfunction,** as a result of the Fall, I also want to make it clear **that I am not saying, “Gender distinction”** is a part of the Curse of Sin.

Boys and girls are of equal value, because all humans are created in the image of God. Equally, males and females are image-bearers in God’s created world. Males and females are to reflect the character and nature of God in ways that nothing else in all of creation can.

**However, gender distinction is also a feature of God’s good design.** God created Adam as distinctly male; and God created Eve as distinctly female. The distinctiveness of maleness and femaleness is poetically and methodically on display in Genesis 2. This foundational chapter of the Bible is the constant reference point for all of the biblical authors when they address the subject of male / female relationship.

I will try to tackle our major questions “*What is a man?*” and “*What is a woman?*” in just a bit, but let me be clear in saying that **gender distinction** is not a result of the **fall** and it is not part of the **curse of sin**. Once again, gender distinction is a major aspect of God’s **good design**.

**Having briefly explained the Fall and the Curse of Sin, and having quickly mentioned the goodness of gender distinction**, let me now get into what I meant when I said “**Gender Dysfunction is a result of the Fall.**” I am saying that the Bible explains why we experience “Gender Dysfunction” in this life, and the Bible makes direct reference to male / female dysfunctionality in God’s Curse upon humanity.

### **Let’s take a closer look at God’s words in Genesis 3.**

In verse 16, God spoke to the woman. He said, “**I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children.**” This “**pain**” and reference to “**childbearing**” is a direct curse upon the woman’s natural part in fulfilling God’s commission to be “**fruitful and multiply**” (Gen. 1:28). It is also greatly significant that God promised that the woman’s “**offspring**” would be the serpent-crushing rescuer (Gen. 3:15). God’s triumph is precisely at the point of human defeat, and God’s power is demonstrated in human weakness.

**God continues His curse** in verse 16 by telling the woman, “**Your desire shall be for your husband...**” (Gen. 3:16). Now, the translation here can be a bit misleading. When we think of someone having “desire for” someone else, we probably think of something positive. A wife desiring her husband is not a bad thing; it is actually very good. But that is not the way verse 16 is speaking. The “**desire**” the woman has is actually **against her husband**, in that her longing is to **rule over him**.

The word used for “**desire**” here is the same word God uses for “**desire**” when He told Cain to resist the sinful urge he had against God and against his own brother, Abel. God said that “**sin’s desire is for [him]**,” but God told Cain that he must **rule over his sin**, and **not let his sin rule over him** (Gen. 4:7). Therefore, in Genesis 3, we are to understand that God is telling the woman that she will want to **rule over** or **dominate** her husband. This is the direct opposite of her created design; she was created as a “**helper fit for him**” (Gen. 2:18, 20).

**Not only do we hear a curse upon the female’s desires, but also on the male’s.** Reading still further into verse 16, we see the fullness of dysfunction take shape. God said, “**Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over**

**you**” (Gen. 3:16). The word used for “**rule**” here connotes *domineering lordship*. Here we see that the man’s **leadership** will be a **perverted role**. He shall not lead his wife well, nor shall he lead to her benefit. His “**rule**” over her is not one of *loving or gracious* authority.

**Of course**, we have seen this play out in human history, haven’t we? Have you ever heard the phrase “**patriarchal society**?” In any history or sociology class, you will learn about the common social practices of a male-dominated and sin-saturated world. In history, and still today, females are often treated with shameful disrespect.

**Today in Afghanistan, for instance**, 6 out of 10 girls never begin an educational path of any kind. Only 5% of Afghan girls attend school past the 6th grade. Half of all Afghan girls are married by age 12, and their husbands are often much older men. One could hardly argue that the marriage is voluntary, since they are arranged by their father and their husband-to-be. In Afghanistan, women are not allowed to appear in public, and a female can only go out with a full covering and a male escort. The legal options for women are nearly non-existent, because the testimony of a female is ½ that of a male in legal disputes.<sup>3</sup>

This appalling treatment of girls and women is truly shameful, but it is also not unusual at all in the history of humanity. From Genesis 3 onward, females have generally been dominated by males. Exceptions to this rule only serve to prove the rule, because they stand out as peculiar among the norm.

Just think about various ways this still occurs in contemporary American culture. Females are often made into objects, and they are paraded about as eye-candy. Domestic violence is still quite pervasive, and men often act abusively towards women. Sex-trafficking statistics are very difficult to measure accurately, but awareness is growing for this heinous crime as well. These degrading realities are true right here around us.

As we survey the ill-treatment of women at the hands of men, we should mourn over such a thing. Our hearts should break that women are often used and abused, rather than encouraged and appreciated. The curse of sin has caused much pain indeed.

**The gender dysfunction we see**, both on the part of females wanting to leave their God-designed role and on the part of males wanting to do the same, is a result of the Fall, recorded in Genesis 3. Where we observe a woman who wants to prove that she can be just like a man, where we notice a man abdicating his responsibility, where we detect competition between the sexes in regards to their pursuit of power over each other; in all of this, we witness the curse of sin.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.trustededucation.org/resources/life-as-an-afghan-woman/>

It is important to note that a major aspect of the transgender issue of our day is a technologically advanced way of doing what many sinful people have been doing for a very long time. If a man does not want to live as a male, then he is rejecting God's design for him and the role which God has commissioned him to fill in life. This is not new.

**What is new is the technological ability** we have today to artificially prop up that same man's sinful desire to reject his God-designed gender. Quite frankly, this seems to me to be the height of hatred for one's fellowman (pardon the pun). I cannot think of any other area of life where anyone would believe it to be loving to affirm someone's utterly foolish denial of objective reality.

**In short, the reason for Gender Dysfunction is sin.** Because we live in a fallen world, we will regularly encounter emotional confusion, psychological disorders, and relational strife. Because of the curse of sin, ideal manhood and womanhood is flipped upside-down. Men and women will both seek to function outside of their intended designs. Some men and some women will even seek to reassign themselves an alternate gender entirely. Though our disobedience may vary, to whatever degree we leave our God-designed role behind, we provide first-hand evidence of God's curse upon humanity in Genesis 3.

### **(3) WHAT SHALL WE BELIEVE & HOW SHALL WE LIVE?**

So far, I have argued that "dysphoria" is a pretty good way to describe life under the curse of sin, and I have tried to demonstrate from Genesis 3 that dysfunction is the reason for that feeling of dysphoria. I have also tried to describe how the Bible explains the reason for the dysfunction we experience in this life. Hopefully, I have done a sufficient job up to this point, but my responsibility is not fulfilled in merely pointing out our current status and our errors.

What good have we received if we only better understand our curse? What hope is there for anyone who has not lived up to their God-designed gender? What benefit have we gained if we only feel the guilt of our failures and sense the probability of our continued dysfunction?

**Well, I'd like to quickly assert 4 things in order to give us hope and a way forward.**

**First**, we may believe the Gospel. **Second**, we may affirm godly manhood. **Third**, we may affirm godly womanhood. **Fourth**, we may live as witnesses of the Gospel in our confused age.

**First, we may believe the Gospel.** As I mentioned earlier, God promised to save guilty sinners by way of a “serpent-crushing” “offspring” (Gen. 3:15). The Bible tells us that Jesus Christ is the one who was “born of woman” and the Son of God (Gal. 4:4). He was the fulfillment of what God had promised throughout the Old Testament (Lk. 24:27). Jesus lived perfectly, exhibited unimpeachable obedience, and then died under God’s wrath in order to take the place of all those who would trust in Him (Rom. 3:21-26). This same Jesus who died was resurrected to life, and He demonstrated that He alone can rescue guilty sinners. Therefore, Christ has borne the full weight of God’s curse upon Himself in order to set us free from the curse. Not only may we avoid God’s wrath for our sin, we may also begin to walk in newness of life right here and right now (Rom. 6:4). By the power of God’s Spirit, He makes us new creatures (2 Cor. 5:17). God not only calls us to live as godly men and women, He empowers us to do so (Eph. 2:10). May God help us to believe the Gospel of Christ and embrace the freedom He provides for us there. May God help us to abandon our sinful desires for our own way and our own glory, and may God glorify Himself as He grows us in holiness.

**Second, we may affirm godly manhood.** Affirming godly manhood requires that we understand how God defines such a thing. We must not fall into the trap of thinking that masculinity is measured by physical prowess, facial hair, meat consumption, vehicular horsepower, or any number of other superficial stereotypes.

**According to the Scriptures, manhood is (godly) servant-leadership.** Allow me to quickly defend and argue for this definition.

Adam was created first (Gen. 2:7). The Apostle Paul says that this ordering (male-then-female) conveys something about the way in which males and females image the glory of God (1 Cor. 11:7-8).

Man “named” Woman, and this was an act of divinely delegated authority (Gen. 2:23). In the Genesis account, think about how God named the “Day” (Gen. 1:4), “Night” (1:4), “Earth” (1:10), “Seas” (1:10), and “Heavens” (1:8); but Man named the “livestock,” “birds,” “beasts” (Gen. 2:19-20), and “Woman” (Gen. 2:23).

Furthermore, the Apostle Paul says the male is to lead from a heart of love and with expressions of love in the marriage relationship (Eph. 5:25-27). **To say anything in the way of defining manhood** without including man's responsibility to lead, love, and serve would be to allow every man in here to believe that God has left him room for sinful truancy or tyranny.

If we are honest, we men are inclined towards either living as absentee men who float from one relationship to another, or oppressive dictators who force others to submit to our rule. Neither is an expression of godly manhood, but God help us to honor and affirm what godly manhood really is.

**Third, we may affirm godly womanhood.** As with manhood, we must also seek to understand how God defines womanhood. Regardless of societal expectations or personal experiences, we will find our greatest joy is knowing and following God's design for us. We must avoid childish stereotypes for womanhood as well, and we must put away any notions of equality that do not allow for distinction.

**According to the Scriptures, womanhood is (godly) submissive-companionship.** Once again, let us consider the biblical realities.

As was stated above, the order of creation is not just a purposeless detail in the storyline of Genesis 2. One must admit the incredibly careful word-choices, structure, imagery, and rhythm of Genesis 1 & 2. God said (Gen. 2:18), **"It is not good for man to be alone; I will make a helper fit for him."** Let us feel the significance and beauty of such a complementary design here.

God affirms the supportive role for which He is going to create this new companion by calling her a "helper." God affirms the equal dignity and value of the helper by saying she will be "fit" or corresponding to the man. God affirms the complementary relationship of the man and the woman by saying that she is "for" him.

The Apostle Paul says the female is to submit to her own husband, in the marriage relationship, as the church submits to Christ (Eph. 5:22-24). Paul also roots female submission to male authority in the home in the creation account of Genesis 1 & 2, thereby eliminating the possibility of claiming that this was only a cultural norm (1 Cor. 11:9-10).

To say anything in the way of defining godly womanhood without including God's design for godly companionship and submissive relationship would be to allow for sinful subversion or obstinacy.

Women, like men, are inclined towards acting contrary to God's good design. May God help us all honor and affirm what godly womanhood really is.

**Fourth, we may live as witnesses of the Gospel in our confused age.**

The Church of Jesus Christ is always called to live according to truth and provide clarity in the midst of a world that is hostile to both. The system of this fallen world is not accepting to such things as I have celebrated this morning. I have said more than just a few things that would get me in big trouble with many in our culture today. But we must always remember what makes the Church of Jesus Christ so powerful – it is not our ability to be like the world; it is our ability to live differently and joyfully.

Make no mistake: those who live contrary to God's design will face the consequences of brokenness, guilt, shame, and frustration. They will live a dysphoric life under the Curse of sin. Of course, it may not always appear that way on the outside, but sin always (in the end) leads to pain and death.

In the midst of our confused and broken world, we have a grand opportunity and a high calling. So often we feel a longing to do something great, but here is the greatness offered to everyday Christians: simply strive to live a God-honoring life according to His design and under His authority (Ecc. 12:13-14). We can live as a testimony to God's gracious grace by simply following Him in the ordinary and unexciting matters of life.

In fact, it is precisely in doing this that we may best witness to the person and work of Christ. Kathy Keller spoke of this when she wrote,

“Jesus is the reason you can trust that God's justice is behind your assigned gender role, whether you are a man who would rather not take leadership or assume risk, or a woman who wishes she could. **Both get to play the Jesus role.**

**It takes both men and women, living out their gender roles in the safety of home and church, to reveal to the world the fullness of the person of Jesus.**

The glory of gender roles, for me, is that **everyone gets to reveal an aspect of Jesus' life.** Jesus **in his servant authority**, dying in order to bring his bride to spotless purity (Ephesians 5: 22– 33), has redefined authority and has demanded that his followers do the same (Matthew 23:

11; John 13: 13– 17). Jesus **in his submissive servanthood**, taking on the role of a servant in order to secure our salvation (Philippians 2: 5– 11), shows that his submission to the Father was a gift, not something compelled from him.”<sup>4</sup>

So, we may all (male and female) exhibit the characteristics of Christ in our relationships with one another. We may honor God by living in glad submission to His good design, and we may show a watching world that there are still at least some of us who are not confused at all about what God would have us believe and how God would have us live.

May God graciously help us to do it.

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES ON THIS SUBJECT

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“Groaning Under the Curse” by John MacArthur

<http://www.gty.org/resources/Blog/B100721>

“Egalitarianism and Complementarianism” by Bruce Ware

[http://experiencetherock.com/mp3/message/2009/broken/gender\\_roles.pdf](http://experiencetherock.com/mp3/message/2009/broken/gender_roles.pdf)

“Modern Stumbling Blocks to Gender Roles” by J. Ligon Duncan

<http://www.downloadpreken.com/artikelen/A353.pdf>

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<sup>4</sup> Keller, Kathy; (2012-12-25). Jesus, Justice, and Gender Roles: A Case for Gender Roles in Ministry (Fresh Perspectives on Women in Ministry) (Kindle Locations 456-466). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.