

## **SS: Marriage, Male & Female, 2023**

### **Lesson 1: Male & Female at Creation**

**INTRODUCTION:** This morning begins a new 11-week SS semester. This class will be considering the subject, “Male & Female, Marriage, and Singleness”. Our practical focus will be on marriage, but we will recognize the reality that marriage is not ultimate nor is it the Lord’s intention for all of his people.

For those of you that were in the recent Systematic Theology class, you’ve had repeated exposure to the opening chapters of Genesis, as we considered the topics of creation and the fall. We turn to that portion of Scripture again this morning, as we focus on the subject, **MALE & FEMALE AT CREATION**. We will reflect upon the following:

**Summary of the Lesson:** *Together as male and female, man is the image of God. Together, they multiply and fill the earth. The male alone was created from the ground and for the ground. The male alone was given the divine command and warning. The male alone named the animals. The female alone was created from the male and for the male. From the very first pages of the Bible we see both equality and differentiation between the sexes.*

**1. First, note that TOGETHER, as male and female, man was called to have dominion, in large measure by multiplying and filling the earth.**

**Gen. 1:26-28** *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.”*

<sup>27</sup> *So God created man in his own image, **in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.***

<sup>28</sup> *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.”*

The mandate to “*have dominion*”, to “*subdue the earth*” is emphasized and very closely tied to God’s decision, “*let us make man in our image, after our likeness*”. The association is so conspicuous that some students of the Bible have asserted that the essence of man being God’s image is that, like him, we are those that exercise dominion over creation. Whether we agree with that assertion or not, it’s clear that this matter of having dominion is emphasized.

That, in turn, is closely connected to the Lord’s command, “*Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth*”. Mankind would subdue the earth, in large measure, by way of precreation. And for that task, our Maker designed humans as MALE & FEMALE. The two different genders were hugely significant from the very

beginning, as God's designed way of the human race being propagated. Of course, the same has been true in the animal kingdom, male and female mating so as to produce offspring.

**APPLICATION:** However much our current culture insists that it's okay, normal, and desirable for two males or two females to have a sexual relationship, everyone admits that such relationships will never produce offspring. Our DNA, as human beings, differentiates between male and female. *"The male genome differs from the female genome in the number of X chromosomes that it contains as well as by the presence of a Y chromosome."*

That basic, undeniable, inescapable biological difference is indispensable in the procreation of the human race. And that undeniable, inescapable biological distinction attests to the reality that gender is NOT a social construct. It is not an evolving shifting matter of perception and choice. It's not a question of my subjective preference. It's true, in a fallen world, some males are effeminate. Some females exhibit masculine tendencies.

Nevertheless, gender is fixed, by God's design, at the moment of fertilization. One chromosome from the sperm and one from the egg determine the baby's sex. And even the presence of sperm and egg reflect upon God's design of man as MALE & FEMALE. Women do not produce sperm. Men do not produce eggs.

Only a male and a female can produce, under our Maker, a human being. And that human being, made in their image (and in that of God), will definitively be either a male or a female. Lord willing, in a couple of weeks, Mike Fairchild will lead us in a biblical theological survey of man as male and female multiplying and filling the earth.

**TRANSITION:** According to Genesis 1, the male/female distinction is not simply basic to procreation.

2. **Note second that the male/female distinction is of the essence of our bearing the image of God.**

*God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them (v27).* The Lord has designed mankind to be a living, finite replica of himself. For humans to accurately reflect who God is and what he is like, it was necessary that man be not only male but also female.

**Is. 49:13-16** *Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth;  
break forth, O mountains, into singing!  
For the LORD has comforted his people  
and will have compassion on his afflicted.*

<sup>14</sup> *But Zion said, "The LORD has forsaken me;  
my Lord has forgotten me."*

<sup>15</sup> ***"Can a woman forget her nursing child,  
that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb?  
Even these may forget,***

*yet I will not forget you.  
 16 Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands;  
 your walls are continually before me.*

**APPLICATION QUESTION:** Why do you think v15 compares God's attachment to his people to that of a nursing mother rather than that of a devoted father?

A: A mother's unique attachment to her child is an expression of her femininity. She is the only gender which can bear children. And her gender is most suited for a child's nurture, comfort, and safety. Normally, a mother's attachment to her children will have a depth and breadth that exceeds that of men.

**Ps. 121:1-2** *I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? <sup>2</sup> My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.*

**Q: Any idea where the word translated "help" first appears in the Bible?**

In these verses and numerous others (Ex. 18:4; Ps. 20:2; 33:20; 70:5; 115:9-11; 146:5), the Lord reveals himself to be the HELPER of his people. In so doing, he relates to them in a wife-like way. The same word is used in the original language of **Gen. 2:18**: *Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."* In a distinctive way, the woman was designed to be a HELPER well suited to her husband. In that capacity, she images God. He is the great HELPER of his people.

**APPLICATION QUESTION:** What is a practical implication of the truth that females reflect the image of God as much as males and bring out aspects of who God is in ways that males alone cannot do?

A: Females are not to be regarded as inferior to males. They are not less valuable than men. They are wonderfully different but not 2<sup>nd</sup> class. They should be appreciated and admired, under God who made them what they are.

**Gal. 3:27-29** *For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.* <sup>28</sup> *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, **there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*** <sup>29</sup> *And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.*

**TRANSITION:** While the creation account draws attention to man as male and female being equally the image of God, it also draws attention to differences between the sexes. Note four ways in which it does so.

- 1) **First, note that the male alone was created from the ground and for the ground.**

**Gen. 2:5** *When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, **and there was no man to work the ground,*** <sup>6</sup> *and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground—* <sup>7</sup> ***then the LORD God***

*formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. <sup>8</sup> And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. <sup>9</sup> ...*

*<sup>15</sup> The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.*

**Gen. 3:17-19** *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;*

*<sup>18</sup> **thorns and thistles it shall bring forth** for you;*

*and you shall eat the plants of the field.*

*<sup>19</sup> 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 unique way in which the male is related to the ground in Gen. 2-3 draws attention to the centrality of a man’s vocation outside of the home. His vocation originally was to “work (the garden) and keep it”. As a result of his rebellion, his life work would be marked by some measure of hardship. Even in a fallen world, however, man’s basic calling is to work so as to provide for his own.

**1Th 4:10b-12** *But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more, <sup>11</sup> and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, <sup>12</sup> so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.*

**1Ti 5:8** *But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*

**APPLICATION QUESTION:** How should these verses color the raising of our sons?

A: We strive to instill in them a sense of calling to manly dominion, nurturing diligence, responsibility, leadership, and the cultivation of their gifts.

2) **Second, note that the male alone was given the initial divine command and warning.**

**Gen 2:16-17** *And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, <sup>17</sup> 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 would be the prophet, priest, and king, under God, in relation to his soon to be created wife. He would be the caretaker of the word of the Lord, responsible to understand it, believe it, teach it, and promote obedience to it. He was to



intercede on behalf of himself and his wife. He was to rule over the garden, being especially careful to obey God's prohibition and do all that he could to ensure Eve's submission to it. She too would be responsible for obedience, but not to the same degree as Adam.

**APPLICATION QUESTION:** What parallel do we see in the NT re the greater responsibility of fathers in the home?

A: Fathers are especially accountable for their homes. Wives are to submit to them, and fathers are addressed when parents are addressed.

*Eph. 6:4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*

*Col. 3:21 Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.*

**3) Third, note that the male alone named the animals.**

**Gen 2:18-20** *Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." <sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> **The man gave names to all***

*livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him.*

This sub-section seems to be subordinate to the Lord making a wife for Adam. Note that v18 could have gone straight to v21. Why the insertion of vs. 19 and 20? It seems to impress upon Adam that there was not then “a helper fit for him”. It serves to prepare him and ratchet up his sense of need for one that is fit for him. When Eve is brought to him, he will respond with a sense of, “WOW!”

The fact, however, that he alone had the responsibility for identifying and naming the animals may support the idea of his being the king of Eden, under God. No small part of leadership is making assessments. Evaluating a given situation equips one to make decisions on how to go forward. At this early stage in Eden, one basic assessment that needed to be made was identifying the animals. That task was given to Adam alone.

**4) Fourth, note that the female alone was taken from the man and for the man. She was brought to the man.**

**Gen 2:18, 21-22** *Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”*<sup>19</sup> ... *But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him.*<sup>21</sup> *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.* <sup>22</sup> *And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.*

**Gen. 3:16** *To the woman he said,*

*“I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing;  
in pain you shall bring forth children.  
Your desire shall be contrary to your husband,  
but he shall rule over you.”*

As the male was made from the ground that needed him, so the female was made from the man that needed her. As Adam was brought to the garden to tend it, so the Lord brought Eve to the man to be his helper. As the Lord’s punishment for sin would hit Adam in relation to his working the ground, so it would hit Eve in relation to her husband and child-bearing.

Clearly, the woman was made for the man. The man was not made for the woman. Her role was to be “a helper fit for him”. The man was not likewise designed to be “a helper fit for her”. The New Testament recognizes the distinction in why the first man and woman were created and the significance of that distinction.

**1Co 11:7-12** *For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man.* <sup>8</sup> ***For man was not made from woman, but woman from man.*** <sup>9</sup> ***Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.*** <sup>10</sup> *That is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on*

*her head, because of the angels. <sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; <sup>12</sup> for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God.*

Men are not superior to women. Men are not better or more important than women. But the Lord has designed men and women to fulfill different roles. That's not true in every detail, as there is a great deal of overlap between what men can do and what women can do. But in the big picture, men are generally called to be leaders and providers. They are called to take responsibility.

Definitively in the home and in the church, men are given the responsibility to lead. Even if they are bad leaders, they still bear heightened responsibility. Ideally in the state, men would lead.

Women were created to be helpers, to come alongside. Their role is to support and serve. We noted earlier that God himself identifies himself as the helper of his people. In no way does such a role convey inferiority. The Lord himself, in measure, subordinates himself to his people in the sense of being more concerned to serve than to be served (Mark 10:45). Women image God in embracing their calling as being the HELPER.

**Ps. 115:9-11** *O Israel, trust in the LORD!*

*He is their help and their shield.*

<sup>10</sup> *O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD!*

*He is their help and their shield.*

*<sup>11</sup> You who fear the LORD, trust in the LORD!*

*He is their help and their shield.*

**APPLICATION QUESTION:** How does the idea of husband as leader and wife as helper come to expression in the history of the Patriarchs?

A: Clearly, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob lead the people of God. They are the ones to whom the Lord speaks. They are the ones with whom he covenants. They have heightened responsibility. Yet, their most significant mission, in a sense, is to procreate. They depend upon the help of their wives to do so.

**APPLICATION QUESTION:** Given the primacy of marriage in the creation account, why is the world to come one in which “*people will neither marry nor be given in marriage*”?

**Matt 22:30** *For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.*

A: Marriage is clearly not ultimate and eternal. It is temporary. Perhaps its most fundamental purpose is to provide for procreation. The new heaven and earth will not need to multiply, for it will be filled with people from every age and from every nation, tribe, and tongue.

