

GOD'S DESIGN FOR MEN & WOMEN:

IN THE HOME AND IN THE CHURCH

CLASS 1: INTRODUCTORY MATERIAL ABOUT MEN AND WOMEN

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

- The goal of this series is to understand what the Bible has to say about men and women in general. Not necessarily a new controversy, but with the rise of transgenderism, homosexuality, and many other gender confusing ideologies, it is important for the Christian to know where the Bible stands.
- Before getting to the Scriptures, we are going to start with how the world views men and women. We are going to discuss the world's attack on gender and God's original design.
- Overall, we want to understand *what the world defines* as men's and women's differences, similarities, and then we are going to find out *what the Bible has to say*.
- After defining men and women from a biblical viewpoint, the rest of the classes are dedicated to viewing men and women within their respective roles.
- We are going to look at what a biblical family is, how a biblical family can influence the world around them and what some of the priorities of parents should be in their home.
- Then the final few classes we will look at what the Bible has to say specifically regarding men's and women's distinct roles, both within the church and home.
- **Here is the schedule for the upcoming lessons:**
 - **January 5th: Introduction and what the World and Bible say about men and women.**
 - January 12th: What is the biblical family? How can a biblical family influence society?
 - January 19th: What are the priorities of parents?
 - January 26th: What are some of the roles of women in the home?
 - February 2nd: What are some of the roles of women in the church?
 - February 9th: What are some of the roles of men in the church?
 - February 16th: What are some of the roles of men in the home?
 - February 23rd: What are some priorities of a husband with his wife?

INTRODUCTION

- **Is it possible in our current day and age to really know the differences between a man and a woman?**
- Recently in 2023, when asked the question to define a woman, Supreme Court nominee Ketanji Brown refused to answer...rather saying “I’m not a biologist.”¹
- The rather startling, assumed truth that Mrs. Brown did not say was that only a biologist would be able to know and define what a woman is.
- Is this true? Do we need biology (and biologists) to be able to tell us who the men and women are in our society today?
- One of the reasons (perhaps the main reason...) that she was not ready to define a woman was possibly because of the rise of transgenderism in our culture. Her non-answer only led to more confusion.
- As Shelmon rightly asserts, “Many educated scientists squirm when pressed to define a woman because if their answer is “an adult human female,” that disqualifies biological men who “identify” as women. Being politically incorrect, that answer would jeopardize their reputation and possibly end their careers.”²
- This is specifically why Christians cannot look to the unsaved world for what the Bible tells us.
- While the world is in chaos now, not admitting the difference between a man and a woman, the Bible has the firm foundation which we can stand upon with no doubt.
- **These scientists are looking to keep their careers and reputations intact, they do not seek to know the truth nor to honor and glorify God.**
- There has long been an attack on both men and women, their distinct roles given by God, and the biblical family. **If the church does not properly define and defend that men and women exist and there are differences between them, the church will follow the world down the drain of chaos.**
- For this class, we are going to start with feminism, then look at homosexuality, transgenderism, and then see how these various beliefs have affected the church.
- The goal is to find out what our culture believes and teaches and then compare that with what the Bible says about God’s design.
- **These are three of the main areas in which our culture has specifically targeted God’s design and foundational principles for man and woman.**

¹ Alan Shelmon, “What is a woman?” *Stand to Reason Clear-Thinking Christianity*, 11 April 2023, <https://www.str.org/w/what-is-a-woman>

² Ibid.

FEMINISM

- What is feminism? While there are varying definitions, this one encapsulates many of them:
 - At its core, feminism is the belief that women deserve equal social, economic, and political rights and freedoms. Over the years, feminism has focused on issues like the right to vote, reproductive and sexual freedom, and equal pay. Feminism has also explored racism, gender norms, self-expression, and much more.³

We will start by discussing religious feminism and feminist theology.

Religious Feminism and /or Feminist Theology

- There are many feminists who have totally rejected the Christian faith and concluded that it is unredeemable and completely man centered. They have rejected the Scriptures and have walked away from the historic faith.⁴
- **For our study, we are going to talk about those feminists who are still in the church but have the goal or purpose to change the historic view of the church.**
- This group, while not completely throwing out the Bible, calls for a reform to the understanding of Scripture for the purpose of promoting their feminist agenda.⁵
 - The goal is to take *how the Bible has been historically understood* and show the error of that understanding so that the church would have a feminist understanding.
- Since modern feminists believe that *much of the Bible was written for men to be able to suppress women*, they want to take out anything that would have that particular ideology.
- Evangelical feminists recognize the authority of the Bible as divinely inspired. However, for a variety of reasons, they do not accept that Scripture teaches there are different roles and responsibilities for men and women in the family or the church or alternatively argue that these differences do not apply today. They seek identical roles for women and men in ministry and also within marriage.⁶
- Notice the theme, it is not that they are going to the Scriptures and saying they are not inspired or authoritative.
 - They want to *keep inspiration* but show *interpretation* has been wrong throughout the years.

³ Emmaline Soken-Huberty, "What is Feminism?" *Human Rights Careers*, n.d., <https://www.humanrightscareers.com/issues/what-is-feminism/>

⁴ Andreas J. and Margaret E. Köstenberger, *God's Design for Man and Woman: A Biblical-Theological Survey*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 309.

⁵ Ibid., 310.

⁶ Claire Smith, "Feminist Theology," *The Gospel Coalition*, n.d., <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/feminist-theology/>

What does the Bible say about feminism?

- The modern concept of feminism in our culture today was not around during the time of the writing of the Bible. *Modern feminism seeks to undermine what the Bible teaches regarding men and women.*
- The Bible teaches that men and women are equal in value to God as they both have been created in the image and likeness of God.
 - **Genesis 1:27** “God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”
- Even though equal in worth, God has given different roles to men and women.
 - **1 Timothy 3:1** “It is a trustworthy statement: if *any man* aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work *he* desires to do.”
 - **Titus 2:3-4** “*Older women* likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, so that they may encourage the *young women* to love their husbands, to love their children...”
 - As one can see, God has given the responsibility of church leadership to qualified men. God has also given the role of teaching younger women in the church to those older women in the church.
- Just because the Bible has given men and women different roles, it is not then assumed that with these roles comes different value. **It takes someone to interpret the Scriptures differently to get to that ideology.*

What are its effects on the church?

- The church wants to see men and women treated with dignity, love, and respect.
- The church desires equality between men and women. *The problem is that equality to the feminist means there are no differences between men and women.* That is not how the church should operate.
- Since feminism has come into the church and has brought much disruption with it, the church has left the historic teachings of the Bible and succumbed to cultural pressures.
- This has left an indelible mark upon the church when speaking of biblical roles.
- The effect of feminism has been the placing of women in the pastorate, leading, and teaching men.
- Women (and men) no longer see the value of women staying at home and taking care of the family.
 - *They now have great aspirations which include lucrative careers.*
- The church suffers because women are no longer concerned with teaching other women (Tit 2:3-5), about submissiveness to their husbands (Eph 5:22), nor to the Word of God (Tit 2:5).
- Feminism and feminist theology seek to undermine the historic interpretation of the Scripture and redefine what *equality* means between a man and a woman.

HOMOSEXUALITY

- Not only does feminism confuse gender roles, but so does homosexuality.
- Our culture has come to accept homosexuality as normal...it has for some time.
- There are no longer any areas of society where homosexuality has not had some sort of impact.
- There is either an agenda from our culture to say, “love is love”⁷ or attempts to try and “revise the traditional understanding of the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah.”⁸
- This is a very emotional topic because we are discussing a person’s identity.
- *When talking about this topic with people, it is important to show love, and at times even restraint.*

What does the Bible say?

- Homosexuality goes directly against God’s *design* for men, women, and marriage.
 - **Genesis 2:24** “For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.”
 - These words “conceive of marriage in heterosexual rather than homosexual terms.”⁹ The homosexual “marriage” is open rebellion against God and should never be accepted in the church.
- To promote or support homosexual marriages is to go against creation order.
- Romans 1:26-27 explain how both men and women “exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural.” Paul also says in these verses “men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in desire toward one another.”
 - *This shows that the natural or God ordained order is for a heterosexual relationship.*
 - When this order is abandoned, God is no longer honored.

There is much hope for homosexuals.

- This is not *the* unpardonable sin. Those who are practicing and promoting homosexuality are not lost forever with no hope of being regenerated and born again.
- In **1 Corinthians 6:9-10**, Paul lists off a host of sins, including that of homosexuality. He says in verse 11 “Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ...”
 - Thus, Paul says that even those who are practicing homosexuality were saved by Christ’s sacrifice.

⁷ “Love is Love” n.d., <https://www.loveisloveislove.org/>

⁸ Andreas Köstenberger with David W. Jones, *God, Marriage, and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation* (2nd ed.; Wheaton: Crossway, 2010), 202.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 200.

- It is not about making the person convert from heterosexuality, but about real Spiritual change.
- *We must remember that Jesus did not come to make bad people good but dead people alive.*
- These once practicing homosexuals were washed, sanctified, and justified. Not by their own strength or power, but in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. There was an internal heart change.
- We as a church must be willing to reach out to any people with the love of Christ and be willing to share the gospel of hope with them.
- God has not abandoned them but can and will save them through the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Our church should be a place that all feel welcome to come in and hear the Word of God taught.
 - *But they should not be a place where all feel comfortable to continue living in their open disobedience to God and His Word.*

What are its effects on the church?

- Since our culture at large has accepted homosexuality, many in the church have abandoned what the Scriptures teach in favor of placating to the desires of our society.
- *Under the guise of love*, many in the church are now in favor of not just allowing homosexuality into the church but allowing church leaders to be open and practicing homosexuals.
- This not only is openly defiant towards God’s Word, but it is leading people down a path which is untrue.
- Once the church embraces homosexuality, they have decided to interpret God’s Word however they want and give in to the demands of society.
- This does not show love to one another but rather allows people to stay in the sin and face God’s righteous judgment after death.
- Just as with feminism, the cultural push and poor hermeneutics leads to the wrong practice in the church.

TRANSGENDERISM

- This is when a person does not feel that their anatomical gender matches their personal identity.¹⁰
- In other words, just because a person has all the “parts” which make them a man or a woman, if their feelings about themselves don’t match, they have *gender dysphoria*.
- A person can then decide they are going to force their bodies to be the gender that they feel is right.
- This can be done by taking pills to stop the body’s natural processes.
 - The person can start to mutilate themselves in order to remove or add body parts.

¹⁰ Rosaria Butterfield, “What Is Transgenderism?” *Ligonier*, 24June2024, <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/transgenderism>
Page 6 of 8

- In the end, a person can never really change their DNA, thus they are always the gender they are born with.

What does the Bible say?

- “In short, the Bible teaches that God made us male or female, and no matter our own feelings or confusion, we should act in accordance with the biological reality of God’s good design. Transgenderism falls short of the glory of God and is not the way to walk in obedience to Christ.”¹¹
- While some may not feel like it, God did not make a mistake with your gender. He is the one who formed all your inward parts and put you together in your mother’s womb (Ps 139:13).
- When we talk about God making a mistake, we undermine who God is...*as if He is not perfect.*
- The Bible also teaches that sin has infected the world and has effects on all things.
 - **Romans 5:12** “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned...”
- When these feelings of dysphoria come upon someone, that is the effect of sin. We need to inform our minds with truth, not our feelings, so that we can combat the sin that is trying to take us over.

What are its effects on the church?

- Those who suffer from gender identity issues are not all falling into sin.
- There are some instances where there is a biological problem which is related to genetics or hormones.¹²
 - The church should investigate if one of its members is having problems in this area.
- **There can also be a sin issue with someone struggling to accept the gender they were created with.**
- If the church is not willing to find out where a person’s feelings are coming from (either biological or sinful), then they are in danger of either hurting the person or allowing them to live in sin.
- The church should never accept someone who wants to “transition” from one gender to another, as that promotes sin and robs God of His glory.
 - **God did not make a mistake when creating someone.**
- It is vital that the church understands the connection between a vibrant and healthy church and how the church views men and women.
- **God has made men and women for His purposes in the world and in the church.**
- **The Bible has given men and women individual roles, based upon their gender, that the world wants to skew and take away.**

¹¹ Kevin DeYoung, “What Does the Bible Say About Transgenderism?” *The Gospel Coalition*, 8Sept2016, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/what-does-the-bible-say-about-transgenderism/>

¹² Butterfield, “What Is Transgenderism”

- By doing so it only further robs God of his glory and the blessings which come upon the church members by serving in the capacity God has ordained.
- The church must stand firm in their belief of God, His Word, and the differences between men and women.

HOW TO MOVE FORWARD?

- Over the next 7 weeks we are going to see how the Bible talks about God's design for men and women and how that belief contrasts with what the world thinks.
- We are going to find out how men and women are to live in this world, as husbands, wives, parents, and fruitful church members.

CONCLUSION

- As we have seen, the culture has determined what they believe men and women are to be.
- Feminism, homosexuality, and transgenderism all go against God's good design for mankind.
- When the church falls into the trap of believing what the culture believes, they effectively remove themselves from the blessings of God.
- Our goal is not to reform the flesh or make a better society, but rather it is to preach the gospel to those who are lost in their sin. By doing so, as they are born again, their hearts are regenerated, and their eyes are opened, and the Holy Spirit can begin the process of change in their lives.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- How have you seen feminism impact your own understanding of men and women in our culture?
- Has your view of homosexuality or transgenderism been influenced by what our broader culture has said?
- Do you think that the church has handled and addressed homosexuality and transgenderism in an appropriate way this century?
 - Why or why not and what would you keep the same and what would you change?