

THE223 Christian Narrative 1 Creation and Fall

Unit 4a Male and Female

Presented by the



For Use by the

Blue Letter Bible Institute

[Web: Study.Bible](http://Study.Bible)

A Ministry of the

Blue Letter Bible

[Web: BlueLetterBible.org](http://BlueLetterBible.org)

Hello and welcome to Session A of Unit 4. We're now halfway through our course, and in this unit, we will turn our attention to the purpose of humanity within creation. As such, we will focus in on two key issues. First, we will seek to understand both the unity and difference to be found between male and female. Second, we will look at the purpose given to humanity at the time of creation. In this endeavor, we will ask and answer the question, "How is humanity alike and different as male and female?" And we will answer the question, "What ought our role to be on earth given God's commands at the time of creation?" Let's start by focusing in on the unity and difference of humanity. Here's our main teaching idea for this session. The creation of man as male and female shows God's image in humanity exists in harmony, equality, and in difference. Now, in our last unit, we went deeply into the subject of the image of God for both a metaphysical and spiritual sense. Today, however, we want to take a look at the practical similarities and differences that exist between men and women.

What becomes clear as we read through the creation and fall narratives, which take place primarily in Genesis 1 through Genesis 3, is that God created humanity through a two-step process. In Genesis 1, we have a general description given to us about the creation of humanity, yet even in this text, we note that male and female are created. That's where it reads, "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." [Genesis 1:26-27] Notice that last phrase, "male and female he created them."

Yet when we come to Genesis 2, we discover that, in fact, the creation of humanity took place at two distinct moments in time. First, God created Adam. But then later on, God created Eve or woman. Here in Genesis 2:7, it says, "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." Then we fast forward to the second part of verse 20 and it reads, "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." [Genesis 2:20-24]

So male and female, both fully human, both fully representing the image of God inherently, yet created distinctly. What are we to make of this? Well, let's start by understanding some high level observations. Then we can move into some of the specifics. First, notice that the creation of male and female as humanity was done in part to reflect the inherent relational nature of God himself. You'll remember that in our earlier discussions of the Trinitarian God, we talked about the fact that God is inherently relational in his own being. In order for his creation to share his image, humanity too had to be inherently relational as well. Theologian Wayne Grudem asserts that between the members of the Trinity, there has been equality in importance, in personhood, and in deity throughout all eternity, but there has also been differences in the roles between the members of the Trinity. If human beings then are to reflect the character of God, we should expect some similar differences in roles among human beings, even with respect to the most basic of all differences among human beings, the differences between male and female. This is what we discover in the opening verses of the Bible, yet we also see within those same opening verses a clear teaching about the image of God within the sexes. We can confidently argue that the Bible does, in fact, teach that both men and women equally reflect the image

of God. One does not reflect God's image more than the other. One does not reflect it less than the other. Rather, they together equally reflect God's image.

What we also see within the creation narrative is the fact that the interpersonal relationship found in the Trinity is reflected in the interpersonal relationships of males and females, most fully expressed in marriage best. So we read in Genesis 2:24, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." And in fact, the idea that the sexual union of male and female inherently represents God's interpersonal nature is not simply constrained to exist in Genesis, but actually finds broader support throughout the rest of the Bible as well. For example, 1 Corinthians 6:16-20 speak of the damaging effects of prostitution, not simply from a physical perspective but from an image or a spiritual perspective as well. There it states, "Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, 'The two will become one flesh.' But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."

Now, we also read in 1 Corinthians 7:3-5 that physical union is at the heart of marriage, that in marriage, two people share an inseparable bond. There we read that "The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control." Now, here we see this idea that in the oneness of marriage, there is a mutual sharing of one another's bodies because there is a relationship that is expressed in marriage that is not expressed anywhere else. And we can continue on. We see the potency of interpersonal relationships within marriage also expressed in Ephesians 5. There in verse 28, it reads, "In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself." [Ephesians 5:28] We see it again in Romans 7:2. "A married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage." In fact, what we discover is that many of the transgressions against marriage are so severe primarily because marriage and the interpersonal relationship between male and female was to be the reflection of the inherently relational nature of God himself.

Now, there are other few important points to note as we consider equality between male and female. First, like within the Trinity, male and female are co-equal in both honor and glory. Second, male and female are both equal in personhood. Completely equal. We see this in Genesis 1:26-27 as well as in Genesis 5:1-2. In the fifth chapter of Genesis, we read that "This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created." We also see this equality in 1 Corinthians 11:11-12. "Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God." So we see that they are both equal.

Finally, we must also note that both male and female are of equal importance and value. The passage we've just read in 1 Corinthians bears that out, as do other passages as well. Acts 2:17-18 bear that out. "And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters (male and female) shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy." Here we see that the pouring out of spirit on the last days is not dependent on sex. It goes both to male and female. Similarly, in 1 Corinthians 12:11, "All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills." So again, equal in importance and their value because both male and female are included in the kingdom of God and received the Holy Spirit and the gifting of the Holy Spirit. We read in Ephesians 3:27-28 sic [Galatians 3:27-28], "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 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." We've got to see that the equality of male and female is level to us both in importance and value. Male and female are both equally important and equally valuable.

Now that we've reviewed both the image of God in harmony and equality, we will turn our attention to the image of God in difference. What we're going to discover is that while male and female equally share personhood and image, they do differ, in fact, in both authority and role. Now, before we get to those two particular differences, let us first note that differences do obviously exist between male and female beyond mere anatomy. It starts by first observing the mere fact that Adam was created first in the creation account. Again, stating Grudem, he argues that the fact that God created Adam, then after a period of time created Eve, suggests that God saw Adam as having a leadership role in his family. No such two-stage procedure is mentioned for any of the animals God made, but here it seems to have a special purpose. The creation of Adam first is consistent with the Old Testament pattern of primogeniture, the idea that the firstborn in any generation in a human family has leadership in the family for that generation. This birthright then belongs to the firstborn son and is his unless special circumstances intervene to change that fact. The fact that we are correct in seeing a purpose of God in creating Adam first and that this purpose reflects an abiding distinction in the roles God has given to men and women is supported by 1 Timothy 2:13 where Paul uses the fact that Adam was formed first, and then Eve, as a reason for restricting some distinct governing and teaching roles in the church to men alone. Now, we must also note that God named the human race after man and not, in fact, after women. This comes to us from Genesis 5:2. There it reads that "Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created."

Finally, when redemption is applied to the human condition later on in the New Testament, what we discover is that it simply reaffirms the creation order. It does not in fact replace it. Colossians 3:18-19 stand as witness to this fact. There the word of God states, "Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them." So there are some clear differences that exist between men and women, yet how should we see these playing out? First, we need to see that a difference in authority exists between male and female. Several points can be noted which show that man is to have authority over woman. First, it was Adam who named Eve. We read this in Genesis 2:23. "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.'" Man named woman both before the fall, i.e., what we just read, as well as after the fall in Genesis 3:20 where Adam called his wife Eve because she was the mother of all living. In the Old Testament, having the right to name someone

implied authority over that person. This can be seen in the way that God named or renamed certain people because he had a certain plan for their lives.

Second, we note that God spoke to Adam first after the fall, even though it was Eve who sinned first. In Genesis 3:9, God called to the man and asked where he was. This strongly implies that God viewed man as the head of the family, that man was accountable for what had happened in that first family. Thirdly, we are told that, in fact, man is the head of woman in the New Testament. In 1 Corinthians 11:3, Paul states, “But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of every wife her husband, and the head of Christ is God.” From these passages, it’s clear that the Bible reveals an order exists which places man in a position of authority over women, something which must be guarded, something which must be shepherded, and because of sin, something that is often abused but true nonetheless.

Not only is there difference in authority, but there also is, in fact, difference in role. The Bible makes clear that Eve was created as a helper for Adam, a support to the work which he was called. So we read in Genesis 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.’” We also see that the role of Adam was to represent, that is, to lead the human race. So it’s Adam that is held to account for sin, and in Adam, humanity dies, as both 1 Corinthians and Romans point out.

Now, in order to give a practical nature to the discussion of the difference of roles which exists between and among male and female, I’m going to lean on John Piper. In his book, “Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood,” Piper offers the following definition for what he calls mature masculinity. What he means by mature, first and foremost, is that masculinity that is revealed in a biblically responsible way. Keeping that in mind, he says that at the heart of mature masculinity is the sense of benevolent responsibility to lead, provide for, and protect women in ways appropriate to a man’s differing relationships. What I want us to key in are those three words: lead, provide, and protect. When we’re considering the role of man and how he differs in his role from woman, we must understand that these three roles are uniquely given to mankind. It doesn’t mean that women can’t lead, can’t provide, or can’t protect. However, it does mean that some of the distinctiveness of masculinity, of what it means to be man, is that man has been specially endowed to lead, provide, and protect. These are distinctives that are reserved primarily for mankind.

Now, we continue with this idea of John Piper and we find a definition of mature femininity. Again, using that word “mature,” we mean biblically responsible femininity. Piper says, “At the heart of mature femininity is a freeing disposition to affirm, receive, and nurture strength and leadership from worthy men in ways appropriate to a woman’s differing relationships.” So again, key in on those three words: affirm, receive, and nurture. Not that women alone can affirm, receive, and nurture, but that one of the distinctives of being female is that they are uniquely endowed to affirm, receive, and nurture better than men. This becomes one of the natural expressions of the distinction of role that they affirm and confirm the leadership of man. They receive and nurture leadership from worthy men, and that they nurture the family. And so we see some of the key and core differences that exist in role as it relates to masculinity and femininity or man and woman.

So we have our final teaching point about the image of God. God’s image exists in all of humanity, both male and female. However, the creation of man as male and female shows us that God’s image in humanity exists in harmony, in equality, and in difference, that male and female are both equally

valuable, equally important, equal in personhood, equal in image, yet they're different. Different in authority and different in role.