

Week 2 “God made them male and female: A Fresh Look at Biblical Personhood”

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Word of the year (4): By, or, “standing beside” ἐκ (ek) 'out from' of, out of; from, away from. Spatially: extension from a space to a goal outer in reference, separation; logically: the means or source of an activity, disassociation or separation

This 6-week sermon series will explore the concept of personhood as God designed it in the Bible, examining how it relates to sex and gender, race, roles and responsibilities, marriage, family, and the various pursuits and passions that shape our lives. Each week will build upon the foundation of God’s creation of humanity, focusing on specific aspects of biblical personhood in a holistic, culturally relevant way.

OUTLINE

Week 2: “Manhood and Womanhood: Roles and Responsibilities in the Kingdom”

1. **Scripture:** Genesis 2:15-23. Proverbs 31,
2. **Main Focus:** Understanding biblical roles for men and women within God’s order and design.
3. **Key Themes:**
 - Ancient Near east understanding of sex and gender according to Genesis 2:15-23
 - Biblical masculinity and femininity: What it means to be a man or woman in God’s kingdom.
 - Leadership, service, and friendship within the roles of men and women.
 - The distortion of roles through the fall and redemption through Christ.
 - Why transgender expression is difficult for Christians to accept
 - **Application:** Encouraging men and women to embrace their God-given roles with faithfulness, courage, and love.

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Week 1 review

We began the series last week by taking a broad overview of humanity from the perspective of **personhood**. As humans our personhood is rooted in being made in the image of God. In other words, from the holiest saint, to the vilest sinner; from the highest intellectual to the mentally disabled; from the most creative artist, to the physically infirmed there is something "divine" about

every human person.

This was my starting point for a reason: God is interested in having a relationship with His creation—His people. Every person on God's green earth who has been made in His image. There is nothing more important in all this world, or universe, or any other place than to have a relationship with God through Jesus. We were created for relationship and God has called us into relationship with Him—warts and all— as embodied humans who must learn to work out that relationship in different in many ways.

You see, there is a lot of material out there about "biblical manhood and womanhood" which often plays to traditional stereotypes. It usually doesn't add anything new but more or less as in politics, the proponents of "biblical manhood or womanhood" play to their base. This often falls into more misogynistic or feministic categories. And there seems to be a strong hunger for this today.

For example

In the Christian world just a couple of years ago, a prominent male American pastor told a prominent female evangelist to "go home" which was apparently a dig at her for not being in the kitchen. He received a lot of support from others in the Christian world, particularly men, who want to reinforce a particular stereotype of womanhood.

Conversely, we are not doing ourselves any favors by failing to recognize that people are different, that men and women are different, and have different strengths and weaknesses which correspond to our biological makeup.

But I do not want to resurrect some ideal from the past. I don't know about you but I do not want to return to a time where women don't have the vote and where men have to go out and hunt for survival or work in the fields all day. So taking a "fresh" look at Biblical personhood means learning from the past so that we can be successful in the future.

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If you have your bibles this morning, I want to invite you to turn with me to Genesis 2:15-23.

Once you have found the scripture, I want to invite you to stand with me as we read the word of God

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."

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Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the 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.

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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. 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.

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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."

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Biological humans

The biological differences between human sexes—male and female—can be classified into several key categories, including chromosomal, hormonal, anatomical, and reproductive differences. Here are some of the most important distinctions, along with sources.

1. Chromosomal Differences:

- Males typically have one X and one Y chromosome (XY), while females have two X chromosomes (XX). This difference dictates many of the sexual characteristics that develop during puberty.
- **Source:** Copenhaver, G.P. & Mullen, L. (2009). "The Role of the Y Chromosome in Sexual Differentiation". *Nature Reviews Genetics*.

2. Hormonal Differences:

- Men generally have higher levels of testosterone, while women have higher levels of estrogen and progesterone. These hormones influence secondary sexual characteristics such as body hair distribution, fat distribution, and muscle mass.
- **Source:** Mendelsohn, A. & Xu, L. (2017). "Sex steroids and body composition: An overview".

3. **Anatomical Differences:**

- There are distinct anatomical features that vary between sexes. For example, males typically have a larger body mass, broader shoulders, and narrower hips compared to females, who tend to have wider hips for childbirth.
- **Source:** Wolff, S. & MacDorman, M. (2010). "Sex Differences in Body Composition". *International Journal of Obesity.*

4. **Reproductive Differences:**

- Females possess two ovaries, which produce ova and hormones, while males have testes that produce sperm and testosterone. This difference plays a crucial role in sexual reproduction.
- **Source:** Kahn, B.B. & Flier, J.S. (2000). "Obesity and insulin resistance". *Journal of Clinical Investigation.*

5. **Brain Structure and Function:**

- Research suggests there are subtle differences in brain structure and function between men and women, including variations in the size of certain brain regions and differences in connectivity patterns, which may influence behavior and cognition.
- For example, women generally have more active brains, particularly in the limbic systems which is related to emotional processing and the prefrontal cortex which assess risk. Women tend to have bigger hippocampus (i.e. memory center of humans) than men.
- **Source:** Fine, C. (2010). "Delusions of Gender: How Our Minds, Society, and Neurosexism Create Difference". *W.W. Norton & Company.*
 - ◆ [brain-chemistry-and-sex-differences-are-male-and-female-brains-reallyvaried](#)

6. **Immune System Differences:**

- Studies have shown that females generally have stronger immune responses than males, which can result in different susceptibilities to diseases and responses to vaccines.
- **Source:** Klein, S.L. & Flanagan, K.L. (2016). "Sex differences in immune responses". *Nature Reviews Immunology.*

Examination

“Manhood and Womanhood: Roles and Responsibilities in the Kingdom”

1. **Scripture References:**

- **Genesis 2:15-24:** This passage describes the creation of man and woman, emphasizing their complementary roles and the establishment of marriage. Adam and Eve are presented as partners, created for relationship with each other and with God.
- **Proverbs 31:** This passage gives detail about the traits and tasks of a virtuous woman. While

the most virtuous woman is rare and hard to find, she provides a frame work that other women can follow.

2. Main Focus:

Understanding biblical roles for men and women within God's design, reflecting the theological and relational dynamics established in scripture.

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3. Key Themes:

Ancient Near East Understanding of Sex and Gender (Genesis 2:15-23):

- **Cultural Context:** In the ANE, gender roles were typically defined by function within the household and religious structures. Women were often viewed in terms of their reproductive capacities and men in terms of their strength and leadership.
- **Biblical Distinctiveness:** The creation of Eve from Adam's side (Genesis 2:21-22) introduces the concept of complementarity—emphasizing equality in essence and distinction in roles. The relational framework highlights partnership, not subjugation, which stands in contrast to some ANE views where women were seen as inferior to men.
- **Spiritual Example:** Adam's recognition of Eve as "bone of my bones" (Genesis 2:23) reflects the deep connection that man and woman share, symbolizing their unity in purpose. This points to the broader biblical teaching of equality in dignity and value, though with different roles in the Kingdom of God.

Biblical Masculinity and Femininity:

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- **Masculinity:** Biblically, masculinity is characterized by leadership, protection, provision, and sacrificial love. Most verses about biblical manhood are framed around the role of the husband, such as in Ephesians 5:25, where Paul commands husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church, giving themselves up for them. This shows that male leadership is not about domination but servant-hearted responsibility.
- **Adam was made of the dirt** which is consistent with the role that many men play in society as construction workers, laborers, and often in dangerous situations.

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- **Femininity:** Biblically, femininity is often associated with nurturing, support, wisdom, and partnership. The Proverbs 31 woman is depicted as industrious, wise, and caring for her household. In 1 Peter 3, wives are encouraged to win over their husbands by their conduct,

reflecting strength in gentleness and submission to God's will.

- **Eve was made of flesh** which is reflected in the feminine care for people and the nurturing instinct.
- Example of coaching girls soccer vs boys soccer.

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- *Strength and dignity are her clothing,
and she laughs at the time to come.
She opens her mouth with wisdom,
and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.
She looks well to the ways of her household
and does not eat the bread of idleness.*
Proverbs 31:25-27
- **Empirical Example:** Modern studies show that relational dynamics where mutual respect, love, and service are prioritized tend to foster healthier marriages and communities. Research in psychology also suggests that when men and women embrace complementary roles, there tends to be more satisfaction and stability in relationships.

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Leadership, Service, and Friendship within the Roles of Men and Women:

- **Leadership:** In the biblical context, leadership is rooted in service. Jesus' model of leadership is one of humility and sacrifice (Matthew 20:25-28). Men are often called to lead, but this leadership must reflect Christ's example, prioritizing the needs of others.
- **Service:** Both men and women are called to serve one another in love (Galatians 5:13). In marriage, service might manifest in daily acts of care, decision-making, and providing spiritual direction.
- **Friendship:** The relationship between Adam and Eve points to the importance of friendship within their roles. They are united in purpose, walking together in intimacy with God and one another. Friendship between men and women should be characterized by mutual respect and love.

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The Distortion of Roles through the Fall and Redemption through Christ:

- **Distortion in the Fall:** Genesis 3 reveals the consequences of sin, including the distortion of gender roles. Where there was harmony, conflict enters: men often misuse authority, and women may struggle against it (Genesis 3:16-19). This distortion manifests in various forms, including

abuse, chauvinism, and resistance to biblical authority.

- **Redemption through Christ:** In Christ, these distortions are redeemed. Galatians 3:28 emphasizes that in Christ, there is no longer male or female in terms of worth or access to God's grace. However, the distinctive roles of men and women remain, now grounded in love and service as restored images of God's original intent. In the Christian community, men and women are called to live out their roles with Christ-like humility and love.

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Why Transgender or Alternative Gender Expression is Difficult for Christians to Accept:

- **Biblical Anthropology:** Scripture teaches that God created humanity in His image as male and female (Genesis 1:27). This binary understanding of sex reflects God's purposeful design in creation. Gender is seen as rooted in biological reality rather than as a social construct.
- **Spiritual Concern:** Many Christians view transgender expression as challenging this fundamental view of creation, arguing that it denies God's intentional design for sex and gender. The confusion of gender roles is often interpreted as a symptom of humanity's fallen state.
- **Compassionate Engagement:** While affirming biblical convictions, many Christian leaders emphasize the need for compassion and understanding when engaging with transgender individuals, recognizing the importance of pastoral care, empathy, and love while upholding scriptural truth.
- **You will never really know a person till you've walked a mile in their shoes.**
- If you want more detail on my thought about the needs of transgender or nonbinary people please read my paper on Christianity and Transgender people linked at the bottom.

4. Application:

- **For Men:** Embrace the role of leadership and protection within your family and community, but do so with a heart of service and humility. Reflect Christ's sacrificial love in your relationships.
- **For Women:** Embrace the role of nurturing and supporting those around you, not as an act of subservience but as a reflection of the strength and wisdom given by God. Recognize that submission in the biblical sense is rooted in mutual respect and service.
- **For Both:** Live out your God-given roles with faithfulness, courage, and love. Celebrate the differences between men and women as part of God's creative design, seeing them as complementary and essential to the flourishing of families and the church. In Christ, these roles are redeemed and become channels for displaying God's love and order to the world.

A special concern for young men:

Lyman Stone, researcher in family and fertility has highlighted several trends indicating that young men in America are increasingly falling behind in critical areas such as education, wages, and

relationships:

1. **Education:** Young men are enrolling in college at significantly lower rates than women, with a persistent gender gap. For example, women now make up nearly 60% of college students.
2. **Wages:** Median real wages for men have stagnated or declined since the 1970s, while women's wages have seen more growth, particularly in higher education sectors.
3. **Relationships:** Many young men report feeling isolated and are less likely than their female peers to form stable relationships, marry, or start families. They are more likely to live with their parents well into their 20s and 30s.

Proverbs 31, traditionally directed at women, highlights virtues of diligence, wisdom, and service. Applying its principles to men today can emphasize qualities such as integrity, hard work, leadership, and care for family and community.

- **Diligence and Work Ethic:** Men are called to work with purpose and excellence in their careers and responsibilities.
- **Wisdom and Planning:** Like the woman in Proverbs 31, men should make wise decisions that benefit their families.
- **Service and Compassion:** Reflecting Christ's love, men should prioritize serving others with kindness and strength.

Ultimately, God calls men to be trustworthy, honorable, and proactive in building strong relationships and communities.

Closing

Proverbs 31:10-31 (Masculine Version)

10 An excellent man who can find? He is far more precious than jewels.

11 The heart of his wife trusts in him, and he will have no lack of gain.

12 He does her good, and not harm, all the days of his life.

13 He seeks out his work with willing hands.

14 He is like the ships of the merchant; he brings his provisions from afar.

15 He rises while it is yet night and provides food for his household.

16 He considers a field and buys it; with the fruit of his hands he plants a vineyard.

17 He dresses himself with strength and makes his arms strong.

18 He perceives that his work is profitable. His lamp does not go out at night.

19 He puts his hands to the task and his mind to the work.

20 He opens his hand to the poor and reaches out his hands to the needy.

21 He is not afraid of snow for his household, for all his family is well cared for.

22 He makes solid investments; his home reflects his care and diligence.

23 His reputation is known at the gates, where he sits among the leaders of the land.

24 He creates value and delivers it, making his work respected.
25 Strength and dignity are his clothing, and he laughs at the time to come.
26 He opens his mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on his tongue.
27 He looks well to the ways of his household and does not eat the bread of idleness.
28 His children rise up and call him blessed; his wife also, and she praises him:
29 "Many men have done excellently, but you surpass them all."
30 Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a man who fears the Lord is to be praised.
31 Give him the fruit of his hands, and let his works praise him at the gates.

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Additional Resources

Week 2

1. Preston Sprinkle [Embodied](#)
2. Mark Yarhouse [Understanding Gender Dysphoria](#)
3. Austen Hartke <http://austenhartke.com/blog/2015/8/10/a-review-of-mark-yarhouses-understanding-gender-dysphoria>
4. Aimee Bird [Inside the Word. Outside the Box.](#)
5. Andrew T. Walker [God and the Transgender Debate: What Does the Bible Actually Say About Gender Identity](#)
6. [How Could Humans Have Evolved and Still be in the "Image of God"?](#)

