

# Biblical Anthropology

*Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion”  
(Genesis 1:26 ESV)*

*When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in  
place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?  
(Psalm 8:3-4 ESV)*

## **Male And Female He Created Them**

**February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

**Genesis 1:27-28; Genesis 2:18-25**

**Rev. Paul Carter**

### **Introduction:**

Good morning everyone! If you have your Bible with you, I would love for you to open it now to Genesis 1:27; that’s on page 1 in the church Bibles. This morning we are further broadening out our foundation. Two weeks ago we talked about the fact that we are HUMANS created by GOD. Last week we talked about the fact that as humans, we were created in the IMAGE and LIKENESS of God; and now this week we are talking about the fact that he made us MALE and FEMALE. In order to properly understand this issue we are going to need to root ourselves in TWO foundational texts, one in Genesis 1 and the other in Genesis 2 – and there is a very good reason for that. As John Hammett and Katie McCoy point out in their book on Biblical Anthropology:

“Genesis 1 reveals humanity’s relationship to the Creator, while Genesis 2 reveals humanity’s relationship to each other. In other words, the first creation account introduces humanity and the creation mandate, while the second account details how humanity will fulfil that mandate in harmony.”<sup>1</sup>

So we have to look at BOTH accounts in order to have a useful conversation about GENDER – this undeniable FACT that when God created humanity, he made us MALE and FEMALE. We’ll read the text and then we’ll zoom out and we’ll talk about the original design for gender, then we’ll talk about how gender has been affected by the fall and then we’ll talk about how we ought

---

<sup>1</sup> John S. Hammett & Katie J. McCoy, *Humanity in Theology for the People of God* (Brentwood: B&H Academic, 2023), 134.

to approach the issue of gender as SAVED PEOPLE in the process of BEGUN RECOVERY. Hopefully you have your Bibles open to Genesis 1. I'll begin reading at verse 27 and then will skip down to Genesis 2:18-25. Hear now the Word of the Lord.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

28 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." (Genesis 1:26-27 ESV)

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." 19 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. 20 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. 21 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. 22 And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.

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."

24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. 25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. (Genesis 2:18-25 ESV)

This is the Word of the Lord, thanks be to God!

Alright, as I mentioned, I want to look at this whole topic of GENDER through three distinct lenses. I want to talk about gender in creation, gender after the fall, and gender among the redeemed. Let's talk first then about gender in creation. What can we say about MEN and WOMEN based on what we've just read in these two foundational texts?

### **Gender In Creation:**

The first thing I think we can say is that:

## **1. Men and women are equal but different**

It is important for us to note that BOTH the male and the female in the Genesis narrative are explicitly identified as having been made in the image and likeness of God; therefore the things they have in common are far more significant than the things that differentiate them from each other. Both the man and the woman have moral and spiritual sensitivities. They both have the capacity to RULE and exercise DOMINION. Abigail Favale says helpfully here:

"Genesis affirms a balance of sameness and difference between the sexes. This is a difficult, but necessary balance to maintain. Most theories of gender lose this balance, veering into extremes of uniformity (men and women are interchangeable) or polarity (men are from Mars, women are from Venus). Both extremes lose the fruitful tension expressed in Genesis."<sup>2</sup>

I love that expression: the FRUITFUL TENSION expressed in Genesis – exactly that. Men and women are not interchangeable but neither are they polar opposites of each other. The things they SHARE are overwhelmingly significant – and that’s why the vast majority of commands in the Bible are addressed to us as HUMAN BEINGS, not specifically to us as men or women. To be HUMAN is the main thing, in the Biblical account, though it does matter that we are MALE and FEMALE, so we need to be careful here to thread this needle. We are not thinking biblically about who we are as human beings if we are EXAGGERATING or minimizing the differences between men and women.

Alright, secondly, we see in the Genesis narrative that:

## **2. Men and women are complementary**

By complementary we mean that they are different in ways that FIT TOGETHER in important and fruitful ways – because of course, you can be DIFFERENT from other things in a variety of ways. I am different than an orange, for whatever that is worth. I am different than a squirrel, for whatever that’s worth – but I am different than my WIFE in ways that can actually lead to LIFE,

---

<sup>2</sup> Abigail Favale, *The Genesis Of Gender: A Christian Theory* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2022), 39.

breadth, joy and productivity, and that's what the Bible is saying. Men and women go together in ways that lead to life!

Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. (Genesis 2:24 ESV)

Now, some people react to the phrase in verse 18 where God says:

“It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”  
(Genesis 2:18 ESV)

Some people say that this makes it sound as if the woman is INFERIOR – that she was created to be the MAID or the servant of the man, but that isn't what the word means. The word means a PARTNER that corresponds to his NEEDS – and the word is often used to describe GOD in relation to man, as it is for example in Deuteronomy 33:29 and Psalm 121:1-2. God is the PARTNER humans NEED to be productive and effective – we talked about that last week – and obviously GOD is not inferior to us, and nor is the woman to the man. The word simply means that we were created to be partners and to work together on the things God called us to do.

Thirdly, we see in this narrative that:

### **3. Men and women are mutually dependent**

They need each other. It is not good for the man to be alone. He has been told to do some things that he can't do without the woman. It's hard to be fruitful and multiply all by yourself. Man can't BE who he is supposed to be or DO what he is supposed to DO without the woman, and likewise, the woman can't BE who she is supposed to be or DO what she is supposed to DO without the man. We were created for God and we were created for each other – that's part of what it means to be a human being. Dietrich Bonhoeffer says here:

“Human beings exist in duality, and it is in this dependence on the other that their creatureliness exists.”<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Creation And Fall: A Theological Exposition Of Genesis 1-3*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 65.

We need each other. We were created for intimate friendship, missional partnership and mutual delight.

That was the plan!

But as you know, great injury has been done to the plan. We are not now the people we were created and intended to be, so we need to think about how GENDER was affected by the FALL.

### **Gender After The Fall:**

Again, this is all foundational – we’ll be coming back and drilling down on several aspects of what we are covering in brief here in future messages. We’ll be talking about the goodness of marriage for example, and we’ll also have a detailed conversation about the fall – but for now I just want to think about how the FALL affected us specifically with respect to our gender. Flip forward probably one page in your Bible to Genesis 3:16. After the man and the woman made the decision to eat the forbidden fruit, hoping to be like God, deciding right and wrong for themselves, they immediately began to change, and not in the ways they had anticipated. When God came looking for them, they HID THEMSELVES, so they were no longer feeling connected to God, and as we go on to discover, they were no longer feeling connected to each other as well. God spoke to each of them in turn, explaining the consequences associated with their actions. When he spoke to the woman God said:

“Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.”  
(Genesis 3:16 ESV)

Some people don’t love the ESV’s updated translation of verse 16, so let me give that to you also in the NIV. The NIV has it as:

“Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.” (Genesis 3:16 NIV11)

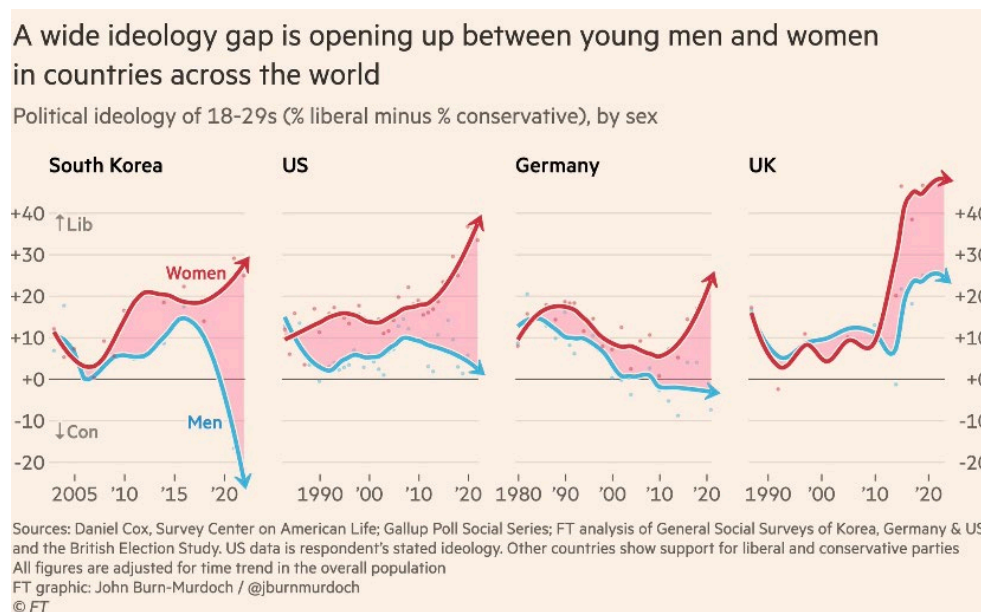
Either way, I think the main point is fairly obvious; as Derek Kidner said memorably:

‘To love and to cherish’ becomes ‘To desire and to dominate’. While even pagan marriage can rise far above this, the pull of sin is always towards it.<sup>4</sup>

After the fall marriage is going to be complicated by DISORDERED DESIRES – in both the man and the woman. Lust is going to complicate love; resentment is going to complicate responsibility. Instead of complementing each other, we are going to want to CONTROL each other and a great deal of the joy and intimacy that was supposed to characterize this relationship is going to be lost.

That’s our situation AFTER THE FALL! We were meant to PULL TOGETHER in our common mission, but now we are engaged in a giant tug of war, and there are no winners, only losers.

As an observer of human history and as an observer of modern humanity, it’s hard to imagine how anyone could argue with that. Men and women are falling out with each other, and falling further and further away from each other – to the general detriment of humanity. Many observers, for example, have noted the huge GAP opening up right now, in terms of the political views of men and women in our culture. (Display slide)



<sup>4</sup>Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 1 of Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries. IVP/Accordance electronic ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1967), 76.

Young men are finding the POLITICS of young women difficult to navigate and they are also struggling to understand the constantly changing rules governing social, romantic and sexual etiquette, so much so that a disturbing number of young men have simply stopped even making an effort. Jean Twenge quotes one young man as saying:

“The internet has made it so easy to gratify basic social and sexual needs that there’s far less incentive to go out in the ‘meatworld’ and chase those things.”<sup>5</sup>

Many of you will be surprised to know that young men TODAY are actually having far less sex than young men in any previous generation in living memory. Now, they’re all addicted to pornography, like the young man in Twenge’s survey, but VERY FEW OF THEM are having actual sex with real live human females – because the approach is filled with landmines they simply cannot navigate.

Now you might hear that and say: GOOD! What comes around goes around! The men had it pretty easy in this culture, at the expense of the ladies for a long time, so cry me a river if the shoe now is on the other foot. This delight in REVENGE against men is remarkably prevalent in our culture right now. You see it in Hollywood, you see it in the media and you see it in the classroom and that’s a major reason why fewer and fewer young men are enrolling in college and university. According to a recent Pew Research Study:

“Today, only 39% of young men who have completed high school are enrolled in college, down from 47% in 2011.”<sup>6</sup>

Women vastly outnumber men now on college and university campuses because fewer and fewer young men want to spend \$30,000 a year to be told that they are what’s wrong with the world. And as Christians, this is one of the things we need to opt out of, because we’re not in the revenge game, we’re in the restoration game. Our goal is not to punish men, our goal is to reconcile men and women. In Canada we have to bring a million immigrants a year into the country right now just to keep the economy from grinding to a halt, because men and women have never been further apart than they are right now. They’re not getting married, they’re not

---

<sup>5</sup> Jean Twenge, *Generations: The Real Differences Between Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, Boomers, and Silents – and What They Mean for America’s Future*, (New York: Atria Books, 2023), 371.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/12/18/fewer-young-men-are-in-college-especially-at-4-year-schools/#:~:text=In%202022%2C%20the%20total%20number,0.2%20million%20fewer%20young%20women.>

having sex, they're not having babies. That's a problem and that's a problem that was predicted all the way back in Genesis chapter 3.

Which leads us to our third question: how should our approach to gender be different within the redeemed community?

### **Gender Among The Redeemed:**

What should men and women look like in here?

As we talked about last week, to be a SAVED PERSON is to have entered:

“the state of begun recovery of human nature”<sup>7</sup>

Thomas Boston said that – and he was paraphrasing the Apostle Paul in Colossians 3. That's what happens when you get saved!! HE BREAKS THE POWER OF CANCELLED SIN! So to be SAVED is to have STOPPED FALLING AWAY FROM GOD and to have STOPPED FALLING AWAY FROM EACH OTHER. It is to have BEGUN the process of recovery. With our healed hearts and having BREATHED in the Holy Spirit it is to be moving BACK and UP towards our creator and towards one another.

To go back to our anchor analogy from last week, in our fallen state, we are chained to an anchor that is pulling us down to the depths, away from God and away from our original dignity and purpose. To be SAVED is to have the chain cut. It is to get a new heart and it is to receive the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit. With that BREATH IN OUR LUNGS we begin to go up – and the Bible tells us to participate in that part of the process! We can't help with the first part of the process. Only Jesus can change our hearts and give us the Holy Spirit – but once we have that we can participate. We can PULL FOR THE SURFACE. We can swim! That's why there are COMMANDS given to husbands and wives in the New Testament, because the assumption is that with a new heart and with the help of the Holy Spirit YOU CAN DO THIS STUFF.

---

<sup>7</sup> Thomas Boston, *Human Nature In Its Fourfold State* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2002), 203.



So very quickly, as opposed to the FRACTIOUSNESS and DISCORD that is characteristic of UNREDEEMED MEN and WOMEN out there in the fallen world, in here, inside the community of the redeemed, the relationship between the sexes should be characterized by three things:

1. **Peace**
2. **Love**
3. **Respect**

We'll hit all of these things in greater detail later on in the series, but let me walk you through them real quick. First of all, within the redeemed community, men and women are supposed to be at PEACE with who and how they are.

Women are supposed to be at peace with being women. In 1 Timothy 2:15 for example Paul says that

“she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.” (1 Timothy 2:15 ESV)

Saved from what? He isn't saying that she'll be saved from her SINS by having a baby – you can only be saved from your sins through the shed blood of Jesus Christ, no Paul is saying here that women will be saved from resentment, and fractiousness and frustration BY embracing the dignity and honour of being a mother. You were made for this! Literally! Do you know what a woman is? There was a really popular documentary making the rounds on the internet a year ago that made a lot of money simply showing that no one in our culture knows how to answer that question. What is a woman? We know what the answer is. Abigail Favale provides a straightforward answer, she says:

"A woman is the kind of human being whose body is organized around the potential to gestate new life."<sup>8</sup>

That's REALITY and nothing good will come from pretending we don't know that. Only anxiety, stress, division, and discord will come from pretending we don't know that. But PEACE

---

<sup>8</sup> Abigail Favale, *The Genesis Of Gender: A Christian Theory* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2022), 120-121.

will come when STOP kicking against the goads. PEACE will come when we LOVE and LEAN into who God has made us to be.

In addition to PEACE, the Apostle Paul calls on men and women to lean into LOVE and RESPECT in their dealings with each other. In Ephesians 5:33 he says to husbands:

“let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.” (Ephesians 5:33 ESV)

Peace, love and respect - that is what gender relations should look like within the redeemed community.

Now, very quickly in the time that we have left, I want to hit upon some practical applications.

### **Practical Applications:**

First of all, given what we’ve just read and what we’ve just seen in the text; I think it ought to be very clear to all of us that Christians needs to say NO to the gender revolution that is raging all around us in the culture.

#### **1. Christians need to say “no” to the gender revolution**

Just like last week, how we talked about, if it’s true that all human beings have been made in the image and likeness of God, then we need to say NO to abortion and to MAID – well so here, if it is TRUE that God created us MALE and FEMALE – that our gender was ASSIGNED by GOD not CHOSEN BY US – that GENDER is a part of the CREATED ORDER, and not merely a social construct – if those things are true, then we need to OPT OUT – in fact, we need to PUSH BACK on the gender revolution. We cannot get on board. We dare not get on board. We were called to be salt and light and there is a desperate need for us to do that right now on this issue.

In our culture right now there has been so much deconstruction around issues of gender and sexuality that our children literally have no idea who they are. The confusion out there is

PERVASIVE and it has come on quick. Abigail Favale in her book *The Genesis of Gender* points out that:

"Prior to 2012, there is no scientific evidence of adolescent girls experiencing gender dysphoria at all. What we are witnessing is a novel phenomenon."<sup>9</sup>

She goes on to say; using data from the National Health Service in the UK:

"In less than a decade, gender referrals had increased by almost 2000%."<sup>10</sup>

The same thing is happening in Canada and the US – it's happening all over the west! Our kids, particularly our girls, have no idea who they are. We have disparaged traditional womanhood, while also vilifying men. Well what does that leave you with? Mass hysteria and confusion. And that's what we have.

Now the therapists out there are telling us that we just need to go along with it. It's called affirming care. If your 12 year old daughter says that she's a boy trapped in a girl's body, well, then you go ahead and give her powerful hormones that will rearrange her internal chemistry and if that doesn't work then you sign her up for some invasive surgeries that will make it impossible for her to ever have a child when she is older.

That's the advice we're getting from the experts. We should chemically and surgically sterilize our kids because they are confused by the culture we've created.

To that insanity the church needs to say a LOUD and EMPHATIC NO.

NO!

We're not playing that game in here. We believe in transformation not transition. We believe that the answer is being reconciled to our Creator and to CREATED REALITY through the person and work of Jesus Christ. You don't solve these problems with chemicals and a scalpel. You solve these problem with GRACE and continual supplies of the Spirit.

---

<sup>9</sup> Abigail Favale, *The Genesis Of Gender: A Christian Theory* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2022), 167.

<sup>10</sup> Abigail Favale, *The Genesis Of Gender: A Christian Theory* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2022), 167.

If ever there was a time for us to STAND OUR GROUND and SPEAK THE TRUTH – in love – it is right here, right now. The lives of our children and the future of our species is literally on the line. We cannot get on board – and we need to lovingly and firmly push back – on the gender revolution in our culture.

And then secondly, based on what we’ve seen in these foundational texts, I think it is important for us to say that:

## **2. The church should be a place where diversity, equality and fruitfulness are celebrated**

In the church we should LOVE the fact that men and women are equal and different. We should CELEBRATE THAT!! We should LEAN INTO THAT! But that means leaning out of how the culture defines us as men and women. We cannot take cultural models and simply sprinkle a little “Jesus” on them. No, we have to go back to our original design – because that’s what grace does! Grace RESTORES. Grace heals. Grace helps us become the people we were created and intended to be IN THE BEGINNING. So in the church men and women should be treated as EQUAL and DIFFERENT. We should have a category for distinct responsibilities. We should value the difference in our perspectives. We should strive for complementarity not sameness. J.I. Packer says helpfully here:

“the man-woman relationship is intrinsically non-reversible ... This is part of the reality of creation, a given fact that nothing will change. Certainly, redemption will not change it, for grace restores nature, not abolishes it.”<sup>11</sup>

So in the church, to the extent that we have received grace and worked in line with grace, we should see equality, diversity and fruitfulness. When men and women come together – marriage, babies, health, life and joy generally result. Which is pretty much the opposite of what we’re seeing in the culture.

---

<sup>11</sup> J.I. Packer, “Understanding The Differences” in *Women, Authority & the Bible*, edited by Alvera Mickelsen, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 299.

Can I tell you something? Do you know what makes a really compelling argument for the truth of Christianity? Do you know what the best apologetic is going to be for our faith in the years and decades ahead? Happy marriages and beautiful babies.

If we have that in here, then we aren't going to need to argue about theology with our friends and neighbours; we can just say: "Hey, you've had complete control of the culture now for two generations, and what has that got you? Nothing but chaos, decline, division and death. But over here in the church, we've got joy, harmony, life and fruitfulness. So why don't you come on over and we can talk. We can talk about who created us, what happened to us, and how we can be saved and restored through the person and work of Christ – thanks be to God!

Let's pray together.