

FOUNDATIONS OF THE FAITH

God's Design for the Roles of Men and Women

Week 3: God's Design for Women

The Creation of Woman

- ¹⁸ Then Yahweh God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him." ¹⁹ And out of the ground Yahweh God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and He brought each to the man to see what he would call it; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. ²⁰ And the man gave names to all the cattle and to the birds of the sky and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him. ²¹ So Yahweh God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. ²² And Yahweh God fashioned the rib, which He had taken from the man, into a woman, and He brought her to the man. ²³ Then the man said, "This one finally is bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; This one shall be called Woman, Because this one was taken out of Man." **Genesis 2:18-23**

- Observations: The woman is formed in response to the man's being alone, and incapable of fulfilling his given function.
- The woman is designed to be a helpmate to the man, and is oriented towards satisfying what the man lacks, and complementing his own duties.
- The woman, unlike all the other animals, is formed from the man directly. She is equal to the man in nature, as she is formed from him.

- Application: The woman is going to share in the duties given to man, though in distinct ways from that of the man. Thus, she is called to subdue, to fill, to help, and to glorify.
- Woman is not made for her own glory, but is specifically made and “pointed” at the glory of her husband. Her purpose is found in the service she can offer her husband/household, and together, they glorify God. Thus she glorifies God by seeking the glory of her husband. This is contrary to fallen nature, as women are often apt to pursue vain glory for themselves, in ways which come natural to women (over obsession of personal beauty, unhealthy concern for public appearance and success, etc.).
- Though the woman is clearly distinct from the man in practical outworking of their given duties, she is nevertheless equal to the man in value, worth, and dignity, for they are of the same essence. This is analogous to God’s own nature within the persons of the Trinity.

The Duties of Women (Subdue, Fill, Help, Glorify)

- ²⁸ *God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it.”* **Genesis 1:28**
 - Observations: Women are collectively tasked, with man, to “subdue” the earth – to exercise dominion and authority over it, bending it and shaping it according to their will, for the purpose of beauty, and to the glory of God. Expressed in other terms, women are called to *work*, to labor with their minds, body, and hands. To expend themselves in a variety of ways.

- Women are also called to “fill” the earth, with the man. The pursuit of having and raising children are inherent to the design, purpose, and function of a woman’s life.
 - Application: Women are not called to mere busyness, but to work. Even more specifically, they are called to a form of labor and productiveness that is uniquely geared toward aiding her husband in his given duties.
 - Women build, produce, and fight, in their way, for and through the family.
 - As man holds a duty to fill the earth, and is endowed with unique design to satisfy that end, so too is woman given for, and designed to complement the man in childrearing. Men and women alike, who forsake the pursuit of the family, will struggle to find true purpose and “fulfillment.”
- *I will make him a helper suitable for him.* **Genesis 2:18**
- ⁹ *For indeed man was not created for the woman’s sake, but woman for the man’s sake.* **1**

Corinthians 11:9

- Observations: “Helper” here means more than a mere extra set of hands. This word is used elsewhere to describe God and His relationship to man. Thus, woman is a helper to man in the most critical sense. She aids, completes, and accomplishes what the man would otherwise be incapable of himself.
- In context, we note that the woman is made as a helpmate not to men, generally, but to their husbands, specifically.
 - Application: If women are helpmates to their husbands, this means that in the context of marriage, her vocation and calling will be tied to that of her husband’s. Her primary vocation, then, is going to be linked to her

husband, and not be in competition with, or detract from, her ability and capacity to serve her husband/family. This means every woman's duty will vary and differ, based on the needs that exist for her husband and family.

- *he [man] is the image and glory of God, but the woman is the glory of man. 1*

Corinthians 11:7

- Observations: As God makes man first, to bring Him glory, so woman is made after the man, for the man, and with a duty to bring him glory.
 - Application: God gives the man the created world and asks him to transform it for His glory. But the woman takes those things given to her by her husband, and so transforms them into something more glorious. In this way, women refine, beautify, and build upon what the man begins. She makes a house a home, the seed of man a baby, groceries a meal, turns her husband's trade skill into a fruitful business, etc.

The Homebase

- ³ *Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, ⁴ so that they may instruct the young women in sensibility: to love their husbands, to love their children, ⁵ to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be slandered. Titus 2:3-5*

- Observations: Paul's exhortation to women in the local church is focused on work that is centered around the family/home. Older women are called to instruct younger women, from their experience, in the duties of a wife to her husband and

children. The focus on these things remain consistent, even through to one's later years.

- Women fulfilling these duties serves as a testimony to the Word of God, and the goodness of God's design. When women satisfy these things, they bring honor to God, by displaying the good fruit that faithfulness in these areas produces.
 - Application: We see the scriptures repeatedly locate a woman's duty to that of her people – her husband and children. Elsewhere she is described as a plant in the home, surrounded by the fruit of her vine (children). Proverbs 31 speaks of woman, however, who is in the marketplace, laboring outside of the home proper. Despite this, even there she is seen as laboring for the good of her own. Thus, the question is not whether women can or should get a job, but how she, in her context, can serve her home. How does she enrich the lives of her children and her husband?
 - Even in old age a woman is called to a vocation which is rooted in the principles she abided by in her younger years. This also would instruct us that before a woman has a husband and children, wisdom lies in her pursuit of preparation for these things.
 - Finally, we should note that if a woman is single, whether by choice or not, she may still live according to a design which is in alignment with these principles, though it be worked out in unique circumstances.