



## Part 15 – What it Means to be Human (4)

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### **Genesis 1:26-28; 2:22-25**

The world tells a story about what it means to be human. It tells a story about gender, sexuality, and marriage. The world's story tells us that we are our own Maker; that we create ourselves to the extent that we can defy the reality imprinted within our cells and upon our bodies. It is a story which claims to offer liberation

from God-given restrictions. The story the world tells is that sex is something which can be separated entirely from any form of commitment or consequence – that sex is about me and therefore all about my pleasure however I might construe that.

And to make matters all the more tragic – with nothing more than a simple expression of emotional sentiment – Christians are throwing away everything God teaches in his Word about the nature of humanity, sin, marriage, the family, sexual ethics, and even salvation because they are being persuaded by the story the world is telling about sexuality and marriage.

The story the Bible tells about gender, sexuality and what it means to be human is longer and more complex than the story the world tells. It is a story which calls for disciplined thoughts and feelings. But God's story is the right story; the better story. And rather than out-argue the world's story, Christians are going to have to out-narrate it with God's better story beginning in Genesis.

### **1. We are embodied**

God made us physical beings. And while our bodies are wasting away, they will be resurrected incorruptible in the age to come. What we are physically helps us understand who we truly are.

### **2. We are irreducibly relational**

Even in paradise it was “not good for the man to be alone” (2:18).

### **3. We are complementarily gendered**

From the beginning God made his image-bearers to be male and female (1:27). This design for gender is a gift of God's goodness as he makes for us those who are like us in necessary ways and unlike us in necessary ways. This orderliness to gender is also a reflection of God's own orderliness.

### **4. We are designed for complementary intimacy**

Vv. 24-25: “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.”

- Any sexual activity outside the bonds of marriage between husband and wife is sinful. Sex outside marriage, indulgence in pornography, sex with someone other than your spouse, and sex between members of the same gender are all acts of sinful rebellion against God and deeply damaging to all who practice such acts.
- Just as in the case with God's design for two genders – male and female – his design for complementary physical intimacy is not anecdotal. It is pattern forming. It is both pattern and command. The complementary design for gender coincides with God's law for sexual intimacy. Nature confirms in myriad ways and God's Word prescribes that physical intimacy is uniquely fit for a male and a female. What is more, God's Word prescribes that this design for complementary physical intimacy is given to a man and woman within the covenant bonds of marriage.

### **1. Marriage is exclusively God's design**

- Throughout the process of the creation of the man and then the woman, and then the design for marriage, God is acting sovereignly. He is the determining Factor throughout. Marriage did not come from the mind of man. It is the unique creation of God. We do not have the authority to change marriage according to

our own preferences. Either we submit to God's design for marriage or whatever we are left with is not truly marriage. Notice that it is only God who can separate the marriage bond.

- Divorce is one of the sad realities of our fallen world. And God, because of rampant sin and the hardness of people's hearts made a provision for divorce in the cases of adultery or abandonment. The reason for those provisions is because – at least in part – adultery and abandonment represent a rejection of the covenant bond (Matthew 19:3-9; 1 Corinthians 7:15).

## **2. Marriage is exclusively between a man and woman**

Vs. 24 – “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”

- The “one flesh” union is not a union of sameness. Sameness cannot appropriately complement what the other is missing. Same-sex intimacy cannot complete nor can it complement. When Adam and Eve were united it was not union only, but *RE*union. What had been taken from the side of the man and fashioned into woman are now united again in marriage. Because God took woman from the side of man Adam had to lose something; he experienced a loss; a healthy, living part of himself was removed from which the woman was made. Adam had to surrender a part of himself for Eve to be made. By himself he was not complete humanity. Something had been taken from Adam and he could never be wholly man until he was joined again to the part that had been taken from him.
- This is why physical intimacy between persons of the same sex cannot ever be a one-flesh union. Such a remarkable union can only be had by those of complementary gender. There is in marriage a blending of complementary personalities in the rich oneness of husband and wife, the outward union symbolizing a much deeper spiritual complementarity. Think about the significance and power of this God-designed complementary intimacy – It creates life – whole persons are made from this one-flesh union. Is there any more powerful a way that God could illustrate the rightness, the goodness, the power of his design? Same-sex intimacy loses all of this. It can only seek to mimic such a reality but in doing so it actually vandalizes this oneness and ends up bringing damage and disease to what God designed for fullness.

## **3. Marriage is exclusively monogamous**

- When asked if it is ever lawful for a man to divorce his wife, Jesus referred directly to Genesis 2: “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.” (Matthew 19:4-6)
- When Adam saw Eve he realized she was wholly sufficient to overcome his deficiency, complete his humanity and fulfill his needs. In marriage God brings a member of the opposite sex to us that we might be completely satisfied with just that one alone. We receive God's provision of this particular member of the opposite sex, and we are complete as a husband and wife until God separates us by death.
- Eve was given to Adam to share his life, to double its joys and its strengths. She could draw Adam out of his isolation and make them heirs together of the grace of life. What she did for him, he also did for her.
- God made marriage to be an exclusive relationship between one man and one woman. The sacred promises and physical intimacy shared by husband and wife are to be zealously guarded. We're told in Malachi 2 that the man who divorces his wife covers himself with violence. Some translations render it as God saying that he “hates” divorce. And yet he allows it in cases of adultery – in cases of abandonment. Why? Because he hates the breaking of the marriage covenant even more. In marriage it is God who joins the husband and wife. Marriage is therefore a holy thing. It is to be guarded jealously. It is to be guarded against intruders and temptations to stray. It is to be a living picture of God's unbreakable faithfulness to his people sealed by the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus.

### **Recommended Resources:**

Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert & Openness Unhindered by Rosaria Butterfield

The Gospel and Sexual Orientation (Crown & Covenant Publications)

The Gospel and Gender Identity (Crown & Covenant Publishers)

Love Thy Body by Nancy Pearcey