



## Part 14 – What it Means to be Human (3)

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

*So God created man in his own image,  
in the image of God he created him;  
male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:27)*

For generations people have asked “*Who* am I?” But in our generation that question has been supplemented by the even more fundamental, “*What* am I?” The first two chapters of Genesis set the moral and theological trajectory for the rest of the Bible’s teachings concerning human identity. What we know about gender, sexuality, and marriage finds its origin in the creation account.

It was during the 1960’s and 70’s when the biblical ethics of sexuality began to be publically challenged and even mocked like never before in the history of the West. But even as pre-marital sex, co-habitation, and divorce became acceptable, it has only been in the last decade that homosexual marriage has become more widely accepted. And even more recently trans-genderism has entered the American mainstream. These massive cultural shifts have occurred at blinding speed. They have produced their own vocabulary and social expectations. Acceptance of such behaviors is demanded to the extent that merely suggesting that biblical ethics are to be preferred over the new innovations is considered bigotry and the offender is often shamed into silence.

What is more, children raised in Christian homes and faithful churches are finding their faith in God and his Word shaken over matters related to sexuality and gender. This is so because they find themselves at a crossroads of either affirming what they are being told everyday by everyone (other than their parents and church) or being considered a bully and a bigot. They have friends who claim to be a gender other than that which is assigned by their biology. They have friends who identify as gay or queer. There is therefore a great emotional and social cost for them to consider these friends as lost souls in desperate need of the Savior.

### *What it Means to be Human...*

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

Genesis 2:7 – “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.”

- We are not only our biology, but we are never less. Our bodies have a great deal to tell us about both who and what we are. The spirit / body separation has more in common with pagan spirituality than the biblical doctrine of humanity. In designing the human body as he has (male and female) God has told us much about who we are and about our role in his world.

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

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.”

- God created the woman as a complementary partner fit for him. While marriage is typical, God does call some to chastity. However, regardless of whether we are married or not, we are called into relationships. Indeed, we cannot be fully human without relationships.

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

1:27 – “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”

- Notice the pattern God establishes for gender. This is not anecdotal or merely one option among many. God was establishing creational patterns. He was ordering his world in ways that would lead to the health, joy, and godliness of his people.

2:22 – “And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.”

- Again, the same pattern of male and female is repeated in humanity as it is in all the living creatures.

### **The “why’s” of gender complementarity:**

#### **A) Gender complementarity is a reflection of God’s orderliness.**

- Moses wrote Genesis during the Exodus wanderings. God’s people had been held captive in a pagan land for hundreds of years. And now they were moving about for decades among pagan Canaanites whose sexual immorality and fondness for child sacrifice was well known. Therefore, what it means to be human – what it means to be gendered beings – what sex is for, are matters addressed in the opening section of God’s Word.
- Genesis 1 describes God’s work of ordering the things he made: He separates light from darkness (vs. 4), the seas from the clouds (vs. 7), and the seas from dry land (vs. 9). These distinctions brought about order and harmony. Before this work of ordering the earth, we are told in verse 2, “was without form and void.” Beginning in verse 11 we are told that God designed the living creatures to reproduce “after their own kind.” That little phrase is repeated over and over again in chapter 1. The creation account unfolds the picture of a universe that is finely tuned to make sense – each part complementing the other. Even plants complement each other in just the right way in order to reproduce. It is the same pattern God prescribes for humanity.
- God loves order. God prescribes, for instance, that our *worship* be orderly because He himself is orderly. He is not chaotic. So orderly worship is particularly glorifying to God because he is an orderly God. This orderliness is necessary for all of life. It is necessary for the good of humanity. Think about this: The only reason the scientific method works at all is because our universe is orderly. It obeys the ordinary providence of God in the created order. The only reason we can do physics and chemistry and algebra and architecture; the only reason we can bake cakes and sculpt clay and listen to music and have babies is because God has made a universe which reflects his own orderliness.

#### **B) Gender complementarity is a call to faithful stewardship.**

- Faithful stewardship of the creation mandate to multiply, fill the earth, and exercise dominion over it depends upon gender complementarity. “The creation of humankind is uniquely presented with the creation narrative in the form of a prescriptive command. Humans are created as ‘male and female’ as part of the command to steward the world as societies built around male and female membered families.”<sup>1</sup>

#### **C) Gender complementarity is a gift for mankind’s good.**

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.’”

- When the man beheld the woman he saw a companion who was like him in all the ways she needed to be in order to be a true companion. And yet she was different from him in ways that were required for her to be a fit helper. The complementarity of the male / female design of humanity makes marriage possible. It makes the one flesh union possible. It makes procreation possible. None of those things would be possible apart from God’s good design of gender complementarity.
- It should not surprise us in the least that every single deviation from God’s design for gender and sexual intimacy results in a breakdown of human relationships and human health. God’s design yields harmony and integration and order. Deviations from those boundaries yield disharmony, dis-integration, and chaos.
- Henri Blocher writes:  
We are made for the limitless God who is revealed in the Bible – but only in a communion which respects order and not confusion. So we finally arrive at the tragic paradox: fury against God’s order feeds on the desire for God. Once the knowledge of God is lost, the sense of God wanders among created things, and not finding him, seeks for his substitute in their dissolution. Once the knowledge of God is lost, mankind accuses finitude of causing his disorder, whereas that disorder is the fruit of disobedience. Once the communion is lost, mankind wants to replace it with confusion.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Gender as Calling: The Gospel and Gender Identity* (Pittsburg: Crown and Covenant, 2017) pg. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Henri Blocher, *In The Beginning* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1984) pg. 73.