

THE GENDER PUZZLE pt.1 9-9-12.

He Created Them Male and Female

(Genesis 1) The Harvard Crimson is the student newspaper at the famous university near Boston and in July it posted an article about the school's appointment of Vanidy, "Van" Bailey as its first permanent director of bisexual, gay, lesbian, transgendered and queer services. Yes, you heard me right. Our nation's most prestigious college has a full-time director of BGLTQ services. Just another sign of the times. This at a school that was founded by John Harvard who said that every student there shall *consider the main end of his life and studies to know God in Jesus Christ*. More interesting perhaps may be the followup edition of the Crimson which contained a correction to the article about Van Bailey. The Crimson reported that they mistakenly referred to Van Bailey using the pronoun "she," which, like all gendered pronouns, Bailey repudiates. They apologize. If you go home today and try to open a personal account with Google you will be asked to identify yourself as either male, female or -- "other." This kind of thing would be funny if it were not so tragic. We are a society that has lost its grip on what it means to be male or female. We are experiencing a crisis of sexual identity which never existed in Western society as long as the Genesis account of creation prevailed. Remember the little song Archie and Edith used to sing as the intro to the *All in the Family* programs? *Those Were the Days*. They sang, "And you knew who you were then, girls were girls and men were men." Then, we knew. But not anymore. And the results are utterly disastrous. Do you realize what a war is taking place around us? I speak of the war of values. Lies are being promoted in the most powerful of ways and if we fail to counter them, if we fail to assert and live the truth, we have failed our children, we have failed our generation and we have failed our God. So, here we are this morning, but not just with another opinion. I stand here as a teacher of God's truth. I am weighted down with a burden I must deliver. I am weary of watching as feminism and evolutionism rip up the lives of men and women by ripping them out of their appointed roles. So, I begin today a series of studies entitled *The Gender Puzzle: Male and Female in Biblical Perspective*. We will look at what God says it means to be a man, what God says it means to be a woman and how we relate to each other in the church, the home and the workplace. Thank God He has not left us in the dark. He has given us His word. One of our hymns says this "Holy Bible, book divine, precious treasure thou art mine. Mine to tell me whence I came, mine to teach me what I am." And in this day of confusion this is a desperate need, to hear God's voice telling me where I came from and what I am.

The foundations of gender are given to us in Genesis 1 and 2, in the Biblical account of creation. And before we even read it I'll tell you what I intend to show you today. I want to prove two simple propositions. The first is that man and woman are the same in many respects and have equal value in the sight of God. We will see how God teaches the essential equality of the sexes. Then we will go on to prove and highlight the obvious and God-ordained differences that exist between men and women. We are equal but different. Genesis 1:**26-27** *Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."*²⁷ *God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.* So what do we see right off? When God made man in His image He made them what? Male and female. So, who is made in the image of God, men or women? Both are. Do you see that? **28** *God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing."* Here is God's declaration to man that he is to rule over the earth and you'll notice that God addresses male and female together. "God blessed them and God said to them." In Genesis one we have man and woman standing side by side, made in the image of God, vice-regents over God's creation. In chapter 2 of Genesis which gives us more detail about the creation of man we begin to discover some differences in man and woman. We learn that Adam was created first, that Eve was taken out of him and made to be his helper. In Genesis 2 we see that the sexes are different, but in Genesis 1 we find them to be of equal status and value. Thus saith the Lord.

(Galatians 3) When we come to the New Testament we find the same general spirit prevailing, and it is far from being the anti-female document some want to claim. In Galatians 3:**28** *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.* Oh my. This is a verse that you find mentioned repeatedly in the debate over sexual roles and distinctive. Some have hailed it as the magna-carta of humanity, setting us free from the shackles of sex-relegated roles. This, I have been told, proves conclusively that the New Testament opposes any concept of male authority and female submissiveness. So, some say. But what really does this verse teach? We can't spend long on it here today, but if you read verse 28 in its context you see that the central issue at stake in chapters 3 and 4 of Galatians is the role of the law in relation to faith. It emphasizes that Jew and Gentile alike come to Christ on the basis of faith alone. 3:**22** *the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin.* This is designed to show that Jews

and Gentiles alike are condemned and can come to God only by faith. So, Paul insists all men are on equal footing, whether Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female. The point is that the gospel is for all persons. Now does that say any thing at all about the distinctive roles men and women might have or not have in the church and the home? No. Verse 28 isn't about that. It teaches that, in Christ, men and women have the same status but it says nothing about roles. If you are familiar with I Corinthians 14 you know all about Paul's lesson on the church being like a body. There he says we all have the same Lord, and the same Spirit, but we each have different roles, different jobs, just like your body parts are all one but have diverse roles. In the body of Christ there is equality of worth but diversity of ability and function. The same apostle who wrote Galatians 3:28 also barred women from becoming rulers in the church and directed them to be subject to their own husbands. There is equality of worth but diversity in ability and function. We will look more at that in a few weeks. If you look at I Peter 3 you will find that Peter held the exact same position. I Peter 3:7 should have ended male chauvinism forever by instructing men to grant women honor as fellow-heirs of the grace of life. But does Peter understand that to mean that men and women are the same in every way? Hardly. This chapter is the bane of the feminist for it instructs wives to honor and obey their husbands. Really, it does.

There are two camps of feminists that you may run across. There are those feminists who consider themselves Bible-believing followers of Christ. These men and women try to argue that the Bible actually supports their claims. They say the Bible allows for women elders in the church and denies any lines of authority in the home. They want to keep their Bibles while they fall in line with the mainstream of feminist thinking. But, dear people, their distortion of plain Scriptural teaching is blatant. Some pick and choose what verses they will mention and what they do mention they twist to their own destruction. The evangelical feminist movement as a whole simply does not take the Bible seriously. I wish they would be more honest. The second group of feminists neither understands nor appreciates the Bible. Indeed, the majority of feminists see the Bible and Christianity as the great enemies to be overcome. In one sense, they are right to see it that way. If your goal is to develop a unisexed society without any sex-based distinctions you can be sure that true Christianity will always stand in opposition. But, if your goal is to stop the senseless abuse of women, to stop the degrading and mistreating of women; if your goal is to lift women up to their God-given and highly esteemed place in society then Biblical Christianity is your greatest friend. Listen to me now. Wherever Christianity has become the predominant faith in a society the roles

and rights of women have come to be respected rather than despised. Paul and Peter and Jesus taught that women and men are of equal worth in God's eyes but that was not the view of Judaism in their day. Josephus, a first century Jew, said, "the woman is inferior to the man in every way." In the Jewish Talmud, the Rabbi Judah ben Elai of 150 AD taught a man to thank God for three things: that he was not a heathen, or a brute or a woman. The prevalent view of divorce in Jesus' day was thoroughly biased in favor of men. But Jesus, in His practice and teaching, stood against all that and lifted up women to a place they had known in no other society. Just look even today at the place of women in Christian lands as opposed to Hindu and Islamic nations. One of the problems our military has had in Saudi Arabia is that the people there are appalled by American women. Saudi women cannot vote and cannot drive and cannot look at a man's face in public. But here come the Americans with women soldiers driving our trucks. The Koran says plainly that men have a status above women. It instructs men to beat disobedient women and send them to bed. Don't tell me that the Bible is anti-women. Jesus Christ was the greatest liberator of women in the history of the world. He talked with all kinds of women. He healed them and spent time with them. He extolled them as examples of virtue and referred to obedient women as his sisters and mothers. The place of women in the story of Jesus and the early church is absolutely remarkable when you consider the society in which Jesus lived. That there have been examples of sexual bigotry in the church and in the name of Jesus there can be no doubt. For these things the church must bow its head in sorrow and repentance. Christian men must expunge demeaning speech about women from their lips. That kind of thing is a grief to our Lord and is the very thing that fuels the flame of feminist rage. God says that women are fellow heirs of the grace of life; they are made in His image with dominion over the creatures. They are equal with men in status and worth, one in Christ Jesus.

But, as we have already indicated, that is far from being the whole story. Now we need to answer the question; "Is there such a thing as masculinity and femininity?" That is not the same as asking whether there is such a thing as a male and a female. Everybody recognizes that there are males and females although many are claiming that the difference doesn't matter. But is there such a thing as femininity and masculinity so that we can talk about the characteristics of manhood versus the characteristics of womanhood? And there are many voices today saying *no* to that question. The major proposition of the feminist movement is that the only essential difference is physical and all else is culturally derived. But the word of God tells us otherwise. I think of the words of Jesus in Matthew 19:4 *Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning*

made them male and female. The perspective of Jesus is not that sexuality was an accident of evolution, but that maleness and femaleness was in the mind of God when He created them and He created them in such a way that each would answer to the need of the other, not that they would be identical in every way apart from their bodies. Because this is true we may feel free to speak of what a man ought to be as distinct from a woman and what a woman ought to be as distinct from a man. God intended for the two to be different in their bodies, minds, and emotions. And quite honestly I'm amazed that anyone should need to be told this. Anyone who suggests that men and women only have differences biologically is being driven by some hidden agenda because the proposition is manifestly absurd. All I had to do was raise two children up to the age of three to know that boys and girls are just plain different. My wife and I did very little differently for Sarah than we did for Andrew. We did not push them toward their interests, but, by the time Sarah was two, I could tell Sarah had no interest in playing ball. She liked to play dress-up. Andrew never did that. Sarah was big into dolls. Andrew never cared for them. Sarah was picky about what she wore. We could never get Andrew to care. And don't tell me that was cultural. I was there. There was more to it than that.

I'll be recommending several books during this series and one of them is George Gilder's work *Men and Marriage* which was first published under the title, *Sexual Suicide*. Gilder, who is a sociologist, does an outstanding job of cataloguing the differences between men and women. Gilder traces the major differences in the male back to the hormonal influence of testosterone. He writes: *The evidence is so hugely voluminous that our sexperts could be excused for their confusion – if all the material, without important exception, did not point in the same direction; that from conception to maturity, men and women are subjected to different hormonal influences that shape their bodies, brains and temperaments in different ways. // The man is rendered more aggressive, exploratory, volatile, competitive and dominant, more visual, abstract, and impulsive, more muscular, and tall. He is less nurturant, moral, domestic, stable and peaceful, less auditory, verbal and sympathetic, less durable, healthy and dependable.* (Gilder p.20,21) I recently read the book *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*. It contained a chapter about the biological basis for gender-specific behavior and it blew my mind. Almost every part of our anatomy is different in some way and especially the brain. If we open our eyes a little we will see that there are some obvious differences in the way men and women are created which leads to some consistent patterns of relationship in any society. You can get your list from any number of sources. I'll share some of

what I have read. Psychologist Norman Wright says: *Men snore more, fight more; their blood is redder, their daylight vision is superior; they have thicker skin and longer vocal cords; their metabolic rate is higher; more of them are left-handed; they age earlier, wrinkle later; men's immunity against diseases is weaker; men talk about themselves less; they worry about themselves more; they are not as sensitive to others as women are.* (Wright p.15 Understand the Man in Your Life) Now maybe you listen to that list and think, "Oh, those are stereotypes." Have you ever stopped to consider where stereotypes come from? They are based on something that is generally true. Is it a stereotype to say that women are more emotionally expressive than men? That statement is not meant to be absolute. Certainly there are some men who are more emotionally expressive than some women but there can be no doubt about the basic accuracy of that statement. Do women talk more than men? I have a joke book I sometimes consult. Most of the jokes are terrible and these aren't especially funny but they make a point. Here's #516. *A scientist rushed into the main control room of the missile center at NASA and proudly announced a new discovery: "Men," he shouted, "there are women on Mars." Another scientist asked how he could be sure. Replied the first, "We shot a communications missile up there and got a busy signal."* And #230 – *The doctor told the patient's wife, "your husband must have rest and quiet. I am going to prescribe these sleeping pills."* "Thanks Doctor," said the wife, "when do I give them to him?" "Oh" said the Doc, "I don't mean to give them to him. I want you to take them." Then there's the one about the preacher arriving at the hospital to comfort a family after their father had died. He asked the man's son, "Did your dad have any last words?" And the boy said, "No sir, momma was with him to the end." Now why are these jokes considered funny? They touch on something we all know is true. Women are more verbal and it begins from the time they are tiny. James Dobson did a study of this and really did discover that the average married man has a daily quota of about 15,000 words. The average woman has a daily quota of 25,000. Dobson says the problem this creates is that the man goes off to work and by the time his workday is done he has used his 15,000, but he comes home to a wife who still has 10,000 words or more left in her day. And one of the most frequent complaints counselors hear from wives is what? "my husband won't talk to me." Fact is women are more verbal - they can talk, want to talk, need to talk and do talk more than men.

And what about intelligence? This is a sensitive one. By normal standards of IQ assessment men do score slightly higher on the average. Certainly men are better when it comes to high-level abstractions. One demonstration of this is the fact that of the five hundred greatest chess players in

history, not one has been a woman. (Elliot Let Me Be a Woman p.146) But don't let that make you feel superior men, I have another set of statistics that pertain to something more important than chess and math. Men commit over 90% of major crimes of violence, 100% of rapes, 90% of burglaries. They comprise 94% of drunk drivers, 70% of suicides, 91% of offenders against family and children (Straight Talk p.156,157) How is that for equality? Is that what feminists want to be equal to? Well, these different abilities, these various strengths and weaknesses lead men and women to different roles, some of which are specifically defined for us in Scripture. We will be looking at what those are, but, for now, let's get this much straight. In the eyes of God male and female are of equal worth, and though we have much in common, we have some very deep, God-ordained differences as well.

Well, I don't want to leave this subject without offering some very important "so-whats?" about all this, and there are three. The first "so what?" is that each of us must gladly accept what we are as man or woman, boy or girl. In a sense I am suggesting that you be "proud" to be a man, proud to be a woman. I may grant honor to women and recognize that they are my equals but it still annoys me when some three year old says, "Yes Mam" to me. I am not a "Mam." I'm a sir and glad to be one. And I hope you ladies feel the same way. Evolutionary thinking leaves us hanging without any real gender identity, but when you understand that God made you male or female you understand that you are what you are because of his perfect design. What you are is no accident. David said in that wonderful 139th Psalm, **13-14** *You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb* ¹⁴ *I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.* He rejoices in how God made him and that extends to sexuality. You are a girl, you are a boy that the Lord hath made. Rejoice and be glad in it, and teach your children the same. Your little girls should glory in their femininity and your boys in their masculinity because it was the choice of a wise and holy God.

Secondly, we need to let girls be girls and boys be boys and not squeeze them into the same mold.® And there are numerous ways this goes on in our society. For children it usually involves pushing little boys into a setting that is dominated by feminine values and concerns. So many little boys grow up now in homes where there is no adult male model for them. They live in a female world and will often feel like a fish out of water. Even worse is the situation in our schools. I don't know about you, but except for a sixth grade PE teacher I went the first 9 years of my school experience without encountering a single man. My world was dominated by women who, for no fault of their own, cannot help but prefer the neat, prim and proper little girls who are so much

more like them than I was. And this puts little boys at a tremendous disadvantage in those early grades. From whence cometh your behavior problems? You elementary teachers know. Almost all of them are boys aren't they? Consider these stats: *In mental institutions for children, boys outnumber girls three to one. More than two out of three students who fail one or more grades are boys. Pathological conditions, including learning and behavioral disorders, are three to ten times as common among young males as among females of the same age. Among students who stutter, boys outnumber girls four to one. About three out of four retarded readers are boys.* Patricia Sexton, professor of Sociology at NYU comments, *There is a reason why boys do not do as well in the eyes of their teachers. When they enter school they are ready to learn things that contribute to the formation of their masculinity, but they are not ready for the restrictions that come upon them from a feminine atmosphere. Therefore, compared to girls who easily conform to the feminine structure of the elementary school, boys appear immature.* (Missing From Action 96- 97) Because of this, George Gilder argues convincingly that education is best carried out in a sex-segregated environment. The needs of boys and girls are not the same and we need to quit treating them as though they were. Let the girls be girls; let the boys be boys and we'll all be better off.

Now, when we come to adulthood the major problem changes and we find our society pushing women into positions in the work place for which they are not meant. Women are still not found in serious positions of combat within our military but in almost everything else they are expected to compete with men who are naturally more competitive, combative and career minded than they are. Elisabeth Elliot writes: *In every society there have been expectations which have been understood to apply to each sex. Of course, these expectations may vary from time to time and from place to place, but the distinctiveness of maleness and femaleness has throughout history been a constant. It is only in our society that there is an attempt to erase this distinctiveness, to encourage women to do what men do. Man's work, no matter how boring, unpleasant or difficult is generally regarded as of more value than women's. "Equal opportunity" nearly always implies that women want to do what men do, not that men want to do what women do, which indicates that prestige is attached to men's work but not to women's. Women's work, particularly the task assigned by Creation exclusively to women, that of bearing and nurturing children, is regarded not only as a lesser value but even degrading. This is a hideous distortion of the truth and an attempt to judge women by the criteria of men, to force them into an alien mold, to rob them of the very gifts that make them what they were meant to be. To subject femininity to the criteria of masculinity is as foolish as it would*

be to judge meat by the standards of potatoes. Meat would fail every test. For women to assume an ersatz masculinity means that they will always lose. (Elliot p.159) But this is exactly what the feminist movement has been doing. Feminism, so called, is the most anti-female thing imaginable. Instead of instructing women to excel in their God-given roles, making full use of their God-given strengths women now are being pushed to compete with men on our home field. The result of that will always be frustration. James Dobson writes: *If I could write a prescription for the women of the world, I would provide each one of them a healthy dose of self-esteem and personal worth. I have no doubt that this is their greatest need. If women felt genuinely respected in their role as wives and mothers, they would not need to abandon it for something better. If they felt “equal” with men in personal worth, they would not need to be equivalent to men in responsibility. If they could only bask in the dignity and status granted them by the Creator, then their femininity would be valued as their greatest asset, rather than scorned as an old garment to be discarded.* (What Wives Wish p.35) Let girls be girls and boys be boys. We’ll all be better off.

My third and final application is that we must respect each other’s differences. Men and women must respect each other’s differences. As the French put it, “Vive La Difference.” Again I must quote Elizabeth Elliot who writes this to her daughter: *You marry not only a sinner but a man. You marry a man, not a woman. Strange how easy it seems to be for some women to expect their husbands to be women, to act like women, to do what is expected of women. Instead of that, they are men, they act like men, they do what is expected of men and thus they do the unexpected. They surprise their wives by being men and some wives wake up to the awful truth that it was not, in fact, a man that they wanted after all. It was marriage, or some vague idea of marriage, which provided fringe benefits they were looking for – a home, children, security, social status. But somehow marriage has also insinuated into their cozy lives this unpredictable, unmanageable, unruly creature called a man. He is likely to be bigger and louder and tougher and hungrier and dirtier than a woman expects, and she finds that bigger feet make bigger footprints on the newly washed floor; they make bigger noise on the stairs. She learns that what makes her cry may make him laugh. He eats far more than seems necessary or even reasonable to a woman who never ceases her vigil against excess weight....Anything he does which seems to her inexplicable or indefensible she dismisses with “just like a man!” as though this were a condemnation or at best an excuse instead of a very good reason for thanking God. It is a man she married after all, and she is lucky if he acts like a man* (p.83,84) He who has ears to hear let him hear. How bout it ladies, do you

despise your husbands maleness? His mess, his eating habits, his hurry, his silence. Do you men despise your wife's femaleness? Her talking, her concern about what's pretty, her need for romance, her concern for the weak. God says for you men to live with your wives in an understanding way. He commands you to respect her and honor her as a woman. No, she's not like you, but do you really want her to be? If we can gain a Scriptural view of our sexuality, we would all be comfortable in what we are; we would allow boys to be boys and girls to be girls and we would respect each other. Men would treat ladies with dignity and special respect. Ladies would esteem men as men. We would all be better off, and the God who made us could smile at what He has done. For it is He, remember, who made us male and female. - Let's stand for prayer-