

The Gender Question (Part 3)
Selected Scriptures
August 22, 2021
Tom Pennington, Pastor-Teacher
Countryside Bible Church, Southlake, Texas

Well, this morning I want us to come back to the third part of a series we've been considering relating to the gender issue. Specifically, we're looking at the fact that our culture has rejected the objective Biblical declaration that God created humanity in His image as male and female. They've not only rejected that, but they have embraced, in its place, a subjective, unproven, secular philosophy called Gender Theory. Don't mistake it, this is one of the biggest issues of our times. So, in my last two messages that I've preached here and today, we are considering several crucial facts that we have to understand if we're going to live in the times in which we live.

Now, we started with a functional definition. What does Gender Theory teach? It teaches that every person has a gender identity that may or may not be their biological sex. Gender theorists use the word "sex" solely for a person's biological sex but they use the word "gender" for this thing they call "gender identity" and that is something very subjective. It's how you feel about your sexuality, not anything objective.

Secondly, we considered its philosophical formation. How did this idea develop? Well, ultimately our society's gender confusion stems from, as we noted, from our abandonment of God, our silencing of the scripture and, in place of that, we have reimagined morality. We've reconstructed our own morality. But specifically, Gender Theory came into its present form through three historical movements that we examined: Darwinian Evolutionary Theory which gave birth to the Sexual Revolution and then, married to the sexual revolution, came the Cultural Revolution - Cultural Marxism - which I explained briefly to you and I will in more detail next week as we consider the Social Justice Movement.

Thirdly, we examined the cultural expressions. How is this trending in our culture? There are three primary expressions of Gender Theory today and its acceptance. First of all, there is the desire or effort to adopt the physical characteristics and gender role of the opposite biological sex. This can be merely a desire in the heart, or it can be a desire married to actual efforts to make this happen. A second expression is sexual involvement with members of the same biological sex. This includes, as we noted, sexual attraction, sexual lust - acting out on that attraction - and sexual intimacy - acting physically with a member of the same biological sex. The third expression is what a culture does and that is the affirmation of transgenderism and its sexual sin as morally good. This is Romans 1 when, not only are

these things happening - they've always happened in the history of the world. People are sinners and we manifest our sin in different ways. Some people manifest their sinfulness in this way. - but rather than it merely happening now, it is being called morally good and something that needs to be accepted and not just accepted but promoted.

Fourthly, we considered the spiritual foundations. What is its source? There are two primary issues of the heart that lie behind the acceptance of the tenants of Gender Theory. One of them is the experiencing of developmental confusion. We live in a fallen world and because of that there can be, even as people are growing up through, particularly, the times leading up to puberty before hormones kick in, there can be some confusion that takes place. But far and away the main foundation our source is rebellion. It is a rebellion against God's word and His sovereign decision of one's biological sex.

Now, we ended our last time together talking about the Biblical implications. How should we respond? And we considered a number of very practical issues such as using the names that people ask us to use, using the pronoun they ask us to use, and attending same sex wedding ceremonies. If you missed one of those two messages leading up to today, I encourage you to go back and catch up because all of that was really foundational to the things we'll consider today.

Today, we do come, however, to a sixth and final crucial fact about Gender Theory and it is the most important of all and that is the Biblical correction. What is the truth? Now, let me just introduce this by saying usually, as you know, I prefer to fully develop both the passages and the topics that we study together. That's just my nature. And I think that's often very helpful. But today, I need to tell you that I'm just going to give you a summary - really a Biblical outline of this issue - because I don't have time in a single message to unpack all of this. But I do encourage each of you to go back through these points. They'll be available this week on the website - the PowerPoint slides and everything - go back through this material. Go back through the texts that we're going to look at. Reread them. Study and meditate on these things deeply because in today's world, you need to know what the Bible says about these issues.

But with that sort of overview and caveat, let's dig in. I want to begin with the Biblical truth about sex and gender. I'm going to give you a series of propositions and support them with scripture. And so, let's launch in. Here's what the Bible teaches about sex and gender.

Number one: God created human beings in His own image.

Go back to Genesis chapter 1. In fact, let me just encourage you to sort of keep your finger there, your mark, or whatever it is in Genesis 1-2 because we'll come here often but in Genesis 1:26, we come to the sixth day of creation and it says this, "then God said, 'let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.'" Now the two phrases, "in Our image," and, "according to Our likeness," are not making two separate points about humanity. Rather, it's a Hebrew way of saying something intensively, of expressing the same reality in two different ways in order to emphasize it. So, verse 26, the first part of it can really be translated like this, "Let Us make man in Our very image." That's the idea.

What is it to be made in the image of God? Well, as you know, there's a lot that can be said about this. Let me just reduce it to the two aspects that are usually included when we talk about man made in the image of God. First of all, there are natural capabilities - things such as rationality, personhood in the same sense that God is a person, moral responsibility, a capacity for relationships as there exists within the Trinity, and the capacity to serve as God's vice regent in subduing or ruling the Earth. All of those things are part of those natural capacities that God gave to mankind, to be, "made in His image." John Calvin puts it this way, "the image of God extends to everything in which the nature of man surpasses that of animals." There's a second aspect, though. Not just those natural capacities, but also spiritual endowments. When God made Adam and Eve, He gave them certain spiritual endowments that were part of what it meant to be made in His image. Now obviously, with the fall, that part of the image of God in man was terribly marred. As theologians like to say, it wasn't completely destroyed but it was - the image of God - was terribly marred and the spiritual endowments were chief among them. What are the spiritual endowments? Well, it's interesting. If you look at what happens to us when we come to Christ, it helps us understand what those spiritual endowments were. Colossians 3:10 says, "we have put on the new self who is" - listen to this - "being renewed to a true knowledge, according to the image of the One who created him." In other words, when we come to Christ, some of what constituted the image of God in us that was marred at the fall begins to be restored. And so, by determining what is restored in Christ, we can read back and determine what was lost. And so, what was part of that spiritual endowment that was the image of God. What we lost, I think Charles Hodge says it well was, "original righteousness." That is, there was a knowledge of the true God, there was righteousness - meaning moral rightness toward others -and there was holiness - that is, a right relationship with God. All of those things were lost or terribly marred and destroyed at the fall. But they are restored in Christ. So, when scripture says, then, that we were made in the very image of God, it means with those natural capacities that distinguish us from animals and the spiritual endowments of a true knowledge of God - righteousness and holiness. So, God created all human beings in His own image.

A second Biblical truth about sex and gender is that God created humanity into genders - equal as persons but distinct as male and female. Now, the moment I say that, sadly, I realize that in today's world there may be no more controversial statement that I can make but you need to understand - particularly those of you who are younger - that this is the view that has dominated human history. Now, understand, these temptations and sins have always been around and there have been pockets and places where they were more expressed than others, but nevertheless, the predominant view of human history is this view that I am teaching you. Only in the last few years has it become increasingly questioned. For example, in a recent opinion piece in the New York Times, the writer argued that - listen to this - "biologically speaking" - so now we're not talking about gender identity or subjective feeling about your sexuality - but "biologically speaking" - the author writes - "there are many gradations running from female to male. Along that spectrum lie at least five sexes, perhaps even more." Now, I have several questions for that author but the chief one is: who says? I mean, where does this come from? What is your authority for saying this? But the bigger question for us is this: why as Christians, in light of the changing times in which we live, do we still believe that there are only two sexes? And the answer is because that is what the Bible clearly teaches.

Look at Genesis 1:26, "Then God said, let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness. Let them rule over the fish of the sea, 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." So God gives mankind dominion over this planet to rule it, to use its resources, to steward it, and then - that's God's determination in verse 26 - and in verse 27 you have the execution of that, "God created man in His own image, in the image of God, He created him; male and female, He created them."

Now, there are a couple of observations there in verse 27. The first one is - I want you to register this because, you know, we live in a world that is so flawed in its thinking that we can easily be influenced by it. You know, you've heard me use the expression before. It's like a fish. You know, a fish doesn't know it's wet because it's so surrounded by the water. In the same way, we can live in a culture where we're not even aware we're being influenced by it because it's so much a part of the air we breathe, but I want you to notice, first of all, there in verse 27 - that it is not sexist to refer to humanity as man or mankind and to use male pronouns for all humans. Why? Because God Himself does it. God Himself repeatedly uses the Hebrew word for man to refer to all humans and God uses the male pronoun to refer to all humans as He does in verse 27. So don't buy into your culture. This is what God has said about the human race.

Secondly, I want you to notice in verse 27 that God does not make man in different kinds as He did the animals. Instead, there is one kind distinguished as two sexes. That's clearly what verse 27 teaches, "male and female He created them."

Go over to chapter 5:1.

This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female and He blessed them.

And notice again.

He named them man in the day when they were created.

When you come to the New Testament, you see that our Lord affirms these concepts. For example, in Matthew 19:4, Jesus says this, "have you not read that God who created them" - listen to this - "God who created them from the beginning made them male and female." So, this is God's doing.

Now, God made, designed, men and women to be different and, as we'll see, He assigned us different roles. However, please note that men and women are equals personally - as persons - and spiritually before God. We are completely equal as human beings made in the image of God - spiritually and personally. That's what Paul says in Galatians 3:28. He's talking about our relationship to God and he says, in virtue of our relationship to God, "there is neither male nor female for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Now, that verse has been distorted a lot of ways - taken out of its context - but don't miss what it does teach. It does teach that personally and spiritually, men and women are completely equal before God. Different roles - we'll get to that - but there is that reality that we we're both made in God's image. One kind in two sexes.

A third Biblical truth about sex and gender is that God designed the differences between the two sexes for human good and flourishing.

On the sixth day of creation, after God made Adam but before He created Eve, God makes an interesting observation. Go back to Genesis 2. Now, let me just point out that Genesis 1 is an overview of the entirety of creation. Genesis 2 is sort of a review of creation with a special focus on the creation of man. So, you have to sort of understand how the two connect together. But here we are in Chapter 2:18. It's during the sixth day of creation after Adam's been created but before Eve's been created and notice the observation God makes in verse 18, "then the LORD God said, 'it is not good for the man to be alone; I

will make him a helper suitable for him.” It's not good for the man to be alone. That's in the middle of the sixth day but at the end of the sixth day, after God had created man as both male and female, notice what God says. Go back to the end of chapter 1, verse 31, “God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was” – what? – “very good.” “It was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.” In other words, God saw that it was not good for there just to be Adam but when He made Eve, when He made the female sex along with the male sex, then He said, “it is very good.” So, He made the distinction of the differences between the two sexes for human good and flourishing.

Number four: in eternity past God sovereignly determined every person's biological sex and at conception assigns the corresponding chromosomes and reproductive structures.

Look again at Genesis 1:27, “God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” And obviously, he's talking here on two levels. On the one level, He's talking about all of humanity but he's also talking very specifically about two people - Adam and Eve. God made Adam male and God made Eve female. God assigned each of them individually their biological sex and He gave them each the corresponding physical makeup and anatomy. Now, obviously today God doesn't create each child born in the same sense that He created Adam and Eve. Instead, He uses the process of reproduction that He did create. But God - and don't miss this - God still superintends that reproductive process in order to accomplish His desired outcome. I can take you to so many places in scripture. Let me just give you one. Genesis 18:10. The LORD said to Abram, “I will surely return to you at this time next year” - 12 months from now, I'm coming back – “and behold, Sarah, your wife, will have a son.” Before Isaac was conceived in Sarah's womb, God had already determined that Isaac would be male. And again, I could show you passage after passage after passage where the same thing is true. God decides before a child is ever conceived. In fact, as the eternal decree says, God determined everything that He would do an eternity past. He decided every person's biological sex and then at conception assigns the chromosomes and reproductive structures.

A fifth Biblical truth about sex and gender is that God intended every person's biological sex to dictate their self-conception as male or female.

In other words, Biblically speaking, there's no such thing as gender identity separate from your biological sex. Look at Genesis chapter 2:21.

The Lord 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. And the LORD God fashioned into a

woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. Then the man said, "this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh."

In other words, he says, "here's one of my kind." You know, "here are these animals. They're each made after their kind. Here's someone that's my kind."

She shall be called "woman," because she was taken out of the man.

There's a word play there in Hebrew: Ish/Ishah.

For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

What I want you to see in this passage is God made Adam male, He made Eve female, and the full intention of God was that each of them act in keeping with what He had assigned. And they did. Throughout scripture, biological sex and gender identity are always identical. That's why God forbids men and women from trying to appear as the opposite sex - Deuteronomy 22:5. It's also why God forbids sexual involvement with the same sex - Leviticus 18, Leviticus 20 - as we saw.

So, don't miss this folks when God determined our biological sex in eternity past and when He assigned us the corresponding chromosomes and reproductive structures at conception, God intended that we would accept His sovereign decision and identify exactly, and only, as what He Himself made us.

Number 6: God sovereignly determined that you would be male or female.

Let's make this very personal. God made this decision about you. He decided in eternity past what you would be - male or female - and He, at conception, made that happen. Look at Psalm 139. I read it a few minutes ago in our scripture reading, but I want you to look at it with me again. Psalm 139:13, David says,

For You (God) formed my inward parts;
You wove me in my mother's womb.
I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
Wonderful are Your works,
and my soul knows it very well.
My frame was not hidden from You
When I was made in secret,

And skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth;

Using poetic language, obviously, to capture what's going on in the womb.

Your eyes have seen my unformed substance;

And in your book were all written

in the days that were ordained for me,

When as yet there was not one of them.

David says, “listen, everything about me, including who I am as a male was designed by You, God. You created me. You wove me using the reproductive process in my mother's womb.” And the same, brothers and sisters, is true for you and God expects you to accept His sovereign decision and to live in light of who He decided you would be.

So, there's the biblical truth about sex and gender. Let's go on, secondly, to consider the biblical truth about men's and women's roles. And, again, I'm going to give you a list of propositions and you'll have to struggle to keep up with me but I want you to have this, alright.

First proposition about men's and women's roles is this: as Creator, God alone has the right and the wisdom to define the nature of manhood and womanhood and He has done so in His word.

I don't get to decide what it means to be a man. You don't get to decide what it means to be a woman. No, God is the only one who has both the authority and the wisdom to tell us that He made males and females different by design. As we've seen in these two passages, Genesis 1 and Genesis 5, that means God had a design in mind and as the Designer only He can tell us what men and women should be like. And He's revealed the nature of manhood and womanhood as He designed it in His word.

A second biblical truth about men's and women's roles is this: Satan and our flesh tempt us to reject God's design and to pursue a different standard for men's and women's roles.

This is universally true. Satan and the world system that he created constantly seek to undermine marriage and family as God designed it. I mean, it goes all the way back to the Garden. You remember what he did with Eve in Genesis 3. What happens there? He says, “no, no. I know God said that, but let me let you think about that a little differently.” Let me challenge you to reconsider that what Satan always does, folks, is he tempts us to substitute human reason for divine revelation. It happened in the garden. It's still happening today. “Well, but I think.” Respectfully, let me say: who cares, okay? This is

Satan's temptation. Here are some current unbiblical ideas about roles that I think Satan and his system are spawning in our culture. See if you've been influenced by any of them.

Refusing to acknowledge obvious physical and psychological differences between the sexes. It's just obvious folks and that's how God made us. It's not sexist to recognize those differences. We are different by Divine design.

Overtly, criticizing and ridiculing the opposite sex. Boy, that is so popular today. If you find yourself - in your mind or with your words - ridiculing and criticizing the opposite sex, you are taking issue with God, the Creator.

Asserting the inherent superiority of your own sex. This is a universal temptation as well. But realize that is not thinking like God. God made us male and female. We are different by design. Appreciate those differences and realize that we are personally and spiritually equal before God, assigned different roles. Give up the whole championing, your sex thing.

Denying the distinct biblical roles that God designed. We'll talk about that in a moment.

Identifying the primary purpose for the differences between male and female as sex. Listen, we live in a world where we are bombarded with the idea that the only reason men and women exist is for sexual gratification. Let me just say to you that God is not embarrassed about sex. He created it for the good of His creatures. It's a good gift, but it is not the ultimate purpose of marriage. What is the ultimate purpose of marriage? Genesis 2:18, "it is not good for man to be alone." It's companionship and for help, for assisting one another in the issues of life.

Mistaking the primary measure of your manhood or womanhood is the time you spend, in the success you achieve in your career. There's a big one. It's a lie.

Undermining the biblical priority God has given to the home. I wish I had time to develop this. You know, before the Industrial Revolution, men and women who are married worked together in their homes, on their family, and usually in the family business, but with the industrial Revolution, all that changed. And what happened? Well, initially the man left and went out. Basically, began to see his primary mission in life as what happened away from his home. Guys, that's unbiblical. That's not your primary mission in life. Your career exists as a way to support your primary mission, which is your family. Genesis 18:19, God says, I have chosen Abraham, "so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD." It's not your wife's job. I mean, it is, but it's not primarily her job. It's

primarily your job. Deuteronomy 6, men, teach your children to love God and to love His word. Ephesians 6:4, fathers, “bring your children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” Understand that you may have bought into a secular theory that came with the Industrial Revolution rather than God's way. Women often depreciate the priority of the home by, now, leaving themselves and looking for fulfillment elsewhere. I'm not saying it's unbiblical for a woman to work outside the home, but Titus 2 is clear that your heart, your priority needs to be your home and family.

But our problem isn't just Satan and these worldviews he spins. Our flesh also, tries to throw off God's design for men and women in marriage. Look at Genesis chapter 3. In Genesis 3, as part of the curse, the conflict between men and women and their roles begins and it comes as part of the curse. Genesis 3:16, “to the woman God said, ‘I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth, in pain you will bring forth children.’” Now, notice the end of verse 16, “yet your desire will be for your husband and he will rule over you.” Now, there's a lot of debate about exactly the ins and outs of what that mean but most agree that it's describing the beginning of marital conflict over roles. “He will rule,” likely describes man's temptation to harsh, oppressive leadership in his home and marriage. Sadly, that's tragically common in marriages around the world. Not right, but common. “Your desire will be for your husband,” may very well describe the wife's temptation to be independent from her husband and even to lead and dominate him. Desmond. Alexander writes this, he says, “these words from the Lord indicate that there will be ongoing struggle between the woman and the man for leadership in the marriage relationship. Eve will have the sinful desire to oppose Adam and to assert leadership over him, reversing God's plan for Adam's leadership in marriage, but Adam will also abandon his God-given pre-fall role of leading, guarding, and caring for his wife replacing this with his own sinful, distorted desire to rule over Eve.” This is one of the most tragic results of Adam and Eve's rebellion against God. This ongoing, damaging conflict between husband and wife in marriage driven by the sinful behavior of both in rebellion against their respective God-given roles and responsibilities.

Number three: every Christian must reject all unbiblical definitions of manhood and womanhood and pursue God's revealed standard alone.

What is God's reveal standard for men's and women's roles again? Again, all I can do is give you an outline or summary outline. But let me do that. First of all, God has established two common priorities for every man and woman - doesn't matter whether you're a man or a woman, these are your priorities. Matthew 22, “love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind and love your neighbor as yourself.” Those are your two life priorities. Secondly, God has set one common goal for the

character of every Christian man and woman. Again, it doesn't matter whether you're male or female. Here's His goal: for your character to be like Jesus Christ. Romans 8:29, "those whom God foreknew" - that is, those whom He chose beforehand to have a relationship with - "He also predetermined their destiny." What's your predetermined destiny? "To become conformed to the image of His Son." So, whether you're a man or a woman, God wants your character to be like Jesus Christ, your Lord.

But thirdly - and here's where we get some difference in distinction - God has also established specific character qualities and priorities that are unique to both men and women. In other words, we share those things, those great priorities. Loving God, loving others. We share the pursuit of our characters being like Jesus Christ but when it comes to our individual sexes, male and female, there are specific character qualities and priorities that God intends for us to pursue. For men, well, turn to Titus 2. You're familiar with this passage. Here Paul lays down for Titus the duties that he used to teach men and women in the church. Titus 2:2, "older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith in love, in perseverance." Verse 6,

Likewise urge the young men to be sensible in all things; show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified, sound in speech, which is beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us.

Also, men, while not all men will be elders, 1 Timothy 3 lays down the qualifications for elders in the first seven verses. Those ought to be qualities that every man - whether he ends up being an elder or not, because not everybody's gifted to be an elder - we all ought to be pursuing those qualities. So, this is what men should be. There are other passages of course, but these are a couple of primary ones.

What about women? What are the specific character qualities and priorities, if you're a woman, you should be pursuing? Well, clearly there's Proverbs 31, right? The excellent woman, the noble, excellent woman is to be like that. 1 Timothy 2:9-15 talk about some of the qualities that you ought to be demonstrating as a woman. Here in Titus 2:3,

Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands so that the word of God will not be dishonored.

And of course, 1 Peter 3:1-6 also describes some other qualities that, as a Christian woman, you ought to be pursuing.

So, here's my question for you, men and women: in addition to pursuing Christlikeness, how serious are you about pursuing and demonstrating those specific character qualities that God says in the Bible should describe you and your sex? Can I just challenge you to read these passages, study these passages, meditate on these passages? Because this is what God says you ought to be pursuing. We all ought to be, in our individual situations.

Number four: God designed most men and women to be married but has specifically gifted some for singleness.

You see this even in the creation account, right in Genesis 2:18, the Lord God said, as a general rule, "it is not good for the man to be alone; I'll make a helper suitable for him." By the way, this works both ways in the sense of companionship. We were made for relationship. We were made for companionship. A lot of single people who aren't gifted for singleness wonder why they're so lonely. Because God made marriage to give you that companionship. Genesis 2:24, "for this reason, a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh." God's design, as a whole, for mankind was marriage.

Turn to 1 Corinthians 7. Paul begins this chapter making the same point. Verse 1, Paul begins this section by answering some questions he had received in a letter from the Corinthians. He says, "now concerning the things about which you wrote" - and I think the next phrase should be in quotation marks. In other words, this is this is something they said and asked him about - "it is good for a man not to touch a woman." In other words, they're talking about euphemism for sexual relationship saying, "you know, maybe, in light of all the issues that it brings and all the problems, maybe it's just good if there isn't a sexual relationship, even in marriage." And Paul goes on to say in verse 2 and following: absolutely not. No, God has given the sexual relationship and marriage - in part, not total, but in part - for our purity. And so, therefore - verse 3 - "fulfill your duty to one another." Your body isn't your own, verse 4. Verse 5, "stop depriving each other sexually unless you agree for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer and then come together again." And verse 6, he says that, "I'm not saying you have to separate for a time for prayer. I'm saying, if you do, make sure it's only a short time. And then he says - having stressed marriage - in verse 7, he says, "yet I wish that all men were even as I myself am." Paul was single. He says, "however" - this is key - each person, each man, "has his own gift from God, one in this

matter, and another in that.” In other words, you are either gifted for marriage by God or you are gifted for singleness. That's a gift. And he goes on to talk about how singleness can be an advantage in verse 32,

I want you to be free from concern. One who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord; The one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and his interests are divided.

He's not saying it's bad. He's saying, “let me tell you an advantage that comes with singleness, if you're gifted for singleness, you can devote yourself in even a fuller way to serving Christ. By the way, did you notice the purpose of singleness? If you're not married - I want you to listen to me - the purpose for singleness is not selfishness. It's not so you can do what you want without being tied to another person. That's ungodly thinking. The purpose for singleness is so you can commit yourself to serve the Lord more. To serve the kingdom. By the way, if you're single, or you want to understand the gift of singleness better, read. John Piper's forward in the book *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* by Piper and Grudem. Excellent summary of the importance of, the value of, even the benefit of singleness.

Number five, as we think God's standards: God designed that most married men and women will have children.

Now, biblically and historically, it's clear that it's not always God's plan for all married couples to have children. And if that's true of you - if you're married and that's true of you – understand that you're not second class. That's not God's second best for you. That is God's absolute best for you as a couple. At the same time, understand that children were part of God's design for marriage. Genesis 1:28, “God, blessed them; and God said to Adam and Eve, ‘be fruitful and multiply and fill the Earth.’” Genesis 4:1, “now the man” – Adam – “had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth.” Malachi 2:14-15 not only teach that unbiblical divorce is sinful but teaches that it's God's plan for most marriages to have offspring and for believers to have Godly offspring. And of course, we just saw it in Titus 2, the older women are to encourage the young women to love their husbands and what? To love their children. This is God's plan.

Number 6: God designed men and women for unique roles.

First of all, in marriage and family. It's interesting, in Genesis, 1:27-28 - we read it a moment ago - God charged both Adam and Eve to work together to subdue the Earth, to utilize its resources, but God

assigned Adam the role of leading and in Chapter 2, it's clear that God created Eve specifically to be Adam's what? Helper. Ladies, don't be embarrassed by that. This is God's design. This is God's purpose. This pattern runs throughout scripture. In fact, according to 1 Timothy 2:12-13, God created Adam first, not Eve, and He made Eve out of Adam in order to establish the principle of male leadership in the home and in the church.

So let me be very clear with what the scriptures teach when it comes to roles. First of all, men were made to lead in their marriages and homes by serving their wives and families in a gracious, sacrificial way, shepherding them toward the Lord. Ephesians 5:23, "the husband is the head of the wife as Christ also is the head of the church." But guys, don't you for a moment, think you have some sort of domineering, authoritative right. What's that leadership to look like? Ephesians 5 goes on to say it's to look like Christ's loving sacrificial, leadership for His church and anything less than that is a lie about Jesus Christ. Wives, what about you in the home? You were made, according to scripture, to be helpers, life givers, and nurturers, submitting to your husband's leadership. Genesis 2:18, why did God make woman? "The Lord God said, 'I will make him a helper suitable for him.'" I hope her. In 1 Corinthians 11:11-12, it says that man has his birth through the woman. There woman is described as the life giver in the sense that she carries and gives birth to each new life. And, of course, multiple passages call for wives to submit to their husband's leadership: Ephesians 5:22, Colossians 3:10, 1 Peter 3. Ladies, please don't misunderstand, and men don't misunderstand, submission is not demeaning. It's not about value or equality. It's about role. Jesus Christ our Lord submitted to the Father. And understand that supporting, nurturing, helping doesn't make you as a woman less valuable or important. Think about it. What is the primary description of the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is called by Christ, "the Helper" - the Helper who would come - and "the Comforter." These are not demeaning roles. They are roles assigned by God. So, we're not talking about personal value. We're not talking about personal importance or spiritual equality. All of those things are true - male or female. We're talking about assigned role. Frankly, there are women who can lead far better than their husbands just like there are privates, in some cases, who can lead far better than their sergeants. We're talking about assigned roles. That's all we're talking about.

What about in the church? Well, God has determined that men whom He has gifted and qualified are to lead in the church by serving as elders. This is clear at the end of 1 Timothy 2, where he says, women are not to occupy this role in the church and he gives the creative order as part of the reason for that. And then, starting in chapter 3, he says, it's to be men. He uses the Greek noun for male. He uses the

masculine endings. That makes it clear. We're talking about men. And he says that the elder must be the husband of one wife. That is, he must be a one-woman kind of man. So, what about other men and women? Well, they are to use their spiritual gifts to serve in every other ministry as we saw in Romans 12:3-8.

So, folks, that's a brief summary of what the Bible teaches about sex and gender and about men's and women's roles. If you want to study this issue more - and I hope you will - let me recommend these books to you. First of all, Gender Ideology by Sharon James. Great book. What Does the Bible Teach About Transgenderism by Owen Strachan and Gavin Peacock. Men and Women, Equal Yet Different by Alexander Strauch. And Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood by John Piper and Wayne Grudem. If you struggle with this issue at all, or even if you don't, get those book, read them, acquaint yourself with what the Bible teaches.

Now, let me just say bluntly as we finish our time together - and I want to do that, but I want you to hear this - if your own ideas about sex and gender or men's and women's roles are different than what we have seen from the scripture today, please understand, your ideas did not come from God. They either came from Satan, from the world system he created, or from your own flesh because this is what the scriptures teach. You need to decide who's going to be your authority on issues of sex and gender and men and women's roles. Is it going to be the culture? Is it going to be your own mind? Well, if you're a follower of Jesus Christ, it's going to be the scripture and it's going to be what we learned today. Let God be true and every man a liar. We live in a world where they don't know they're wet with Satan's lies. Don't let yourself be swept along. Let's pray together.

Father, thank You for Your word, it's clarity on the issues of our times. Lord, help us to renounce ourselves, our own reason and intellect. Don't let us substitute our reason for Divine revelation. Father, help us, if we're going to be followers of Christ, to embrace what He embraced and that is Your eternal word. Help us to live in light of it. Lord, help us to be kind and gracious toward those who are captured by these false ideas to share the gospel with them but, Father, let us be determined to stick with the truth and to live in light of it. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.