

Gender Roles - Ephesians 5:22-33
Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

What does the Bible teach about gender roles?

Now that is a loaded question, on so many levels. Of course, this is a question that is full of cultural land mines. But that should never keep us from answering. The larger issue is the term “gender roles,” because almost every culture takes its own understanding of what it means to be male and female, and the roles that are generally culturally constructed and then tries to baptize them. In our culture, to be masculine can mean being a dude who drinks bourbon and smokes cigars, grills but does not work in the kitchen, watches football, and loves power tools. And to be feminine involves having at least a little bit of the Disney princesses embedded in your soul. Head to a Middle-Eastern culture, and the idea of masculinity and femininity will look vastly different. And herein lies the problem. If we are asking how the Bible answers our culture’s understanding of gender roles, generally the Bible is going to point out the idolatry structures they are built on, constructing something vastly different in the midst of His people. Most of these have been built on male dominated, masogynistic, and oppressive understandings of women, failing to see them as God’s image bearers and therefore equal in being, standing before God, giftings, and participants in God’s purposes.

To understand this question then, we need to get at the heart of how the Scriptures address the issue of masculinity and femininity, and the creation narratives set the trajectories. As the peak of His creative glory, God creates Adam and Eve. We are told that God said “Let us (clue here), make man in our image... male and female He created them.” From the very beginning, what we see is this ontological (in their being) equality as human beings. Each is infinitely important and the peak of all creation, because each, individually bears the imprint of the nature of God Himself. Yet, they are also functionally different, male and female, and there is deep meaning in this. Gender is one of God’s great gifts to humanity. God created two beings who are infinitely alike and infinitely different. While the battle of the sexes may make us question this, the gift of gender is one of the greatest gifts given to humanity. In the first (and all other marriage) God brings together these opposites to form a mysterious union. In the larger world context, there tends to be deep wirings that affect our bodies, but also reach into the souls of men and women. These glorious differences are needed for humanity to fulfill the God given purpose to be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. In other words, the mandate of dominion given by God to Adam and Eve, and to all of humanity by extension is a male/female partnership in which they are equal participants. Don’t agree with me, go read Genesis 1:28, “And God blessed them, and He said to them . Notice that God did not say this to Adam and then say, and I am going to give you another person who will make sure you fulfill your call. The creation mandate is a partnership. Push this forward to the New Testament and these trajectories are given application to the Great Commission mandate that Jesus gave His church.

Why would God do this? Some of us might answer that it seems to be God’s way of making life annoying. Broken world and all. But the truth is that from the first story and throughout the Scriptures, we are taught that God’s gift of gender is always pointing way beyond itself to much deeper and glorious realities. In Genesis 1, the One God who is also “Let us”, creates two beings who are in the image of God. In other words, each is fully in the image of God, yet they are deeply different and distinct. And the One God, the God whom it is spoken, “Hear oh Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one, yet exists as three persons, takes Adam and Eve, puts them together and says, “the two will be one flesh.” Unity in diversity as a picture of something much greater than itself. Again, come to the New Testament and we see this unity out of diversity that includes not only men and women, but people from all cultures who become One. Then, to take it one step further, Paul tells us in Ephesians 5 that in marriage the differences point us to the redemptive relationship between Christ and the church.

So what we see is that the Bible consistently affirms the equality of men and women, the unity in relationships, and at the same time celebrating the differences as God's gift. And these differences do have implications. Men will tend to be builders and will generally have a more outward oriented focus as a worker and provider. Women will tend to be nurturers, with deeper focus on relationships and connections. Yet, each man and woman are different, and therefore the expression of these differences will look vastly different in each marriage. Yet, the Bible does give roles within the home that also have implications for ministry in the church. In the home, the husband is called to be the sacrificial leader or head of the home, laying his life down as Christ did for the church. And the wife is to submit to her husband, respecting his leadership and following his lead. In the church, God has reserved the office of pastor and the role of preaching for men. Not enough time in this article to break down the reasons, but the one thing we should know is true. When we seek to honor God's purpose for gender the outcome will be that we glorify God and experience the greatest flourishing in our lives.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
2 Samuel 19	2 Samuel 20	2 Samuel 21	2 Samuel 22	2 Samuel 23	2 Samuel 24	Matthew 1

Reading from this past week's sermon: Ephesians 5:22-33

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Revelation 21:1-8

Family Worship

Song - *You've Already Won*

<https://youtu.be/sJOghlVI3Mc?feature=shared>

Gospel Project

Unit: King David

Story: David Became King

Big Picture Question: Is there anyone or anything greater than God?

Answer: No, God is greater than everything and everyone

Scripture: 2 Samuel 5, 7

New City Catechism

Question 30: What is faith in Jesus Christ?

Answer: Receiving and resting on him alone for salvation as he is offered to us in the gospel.

Verse: Galatians 2:20

Ephesians 5:22-33

- Why do you think God would make us male and female? What are the blessings of this? What are the struggles?
- What are some ways that our culture's understanding of gender roles is different from the vision set forth in the Scriptures?
- How can we nurture authentic masculinity and femininity in our churches? Marriages? For people who are single? For our teens and children?
- Do you think our culture tends to flatten gender differences or over inflate gender differences?
- How would you respond to someone who says that the church's teaching is sexist?

Prayer

God would help us honor His design for us as men and women while celebrating the equality and beauty of the image of God in each person.

*Pray for our partners with the Send Church Planting Network and the over 11,000 new churches they have planted in the US.