



TIME OF GRACE®

God & Gender: God's Design for Men & Women (Parts 1 and 2)

Study Notes

Summary

In the beginning, when everything was perfect, God created people. Not only did he create Adam and Eve “in his image”; he also “created them male and female.” This message lays the foundation for our faith when it comes to gender, a faith in the Father who loves everyone of the children he has created.

- **Big Idea:** God made men and women _____ and _____.

UNIQUE

UNITED

- **Genesis 1:27,28:** ²⁷ So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. ²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

- United: _____

- United: _____

- Unique: _____

- Unique: _____

- **Genesis 2:20-22:** ²⁰ But for Adam no suitable helper was found. ²¹ So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. ²² Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.
 - Unique: _____

- **Genesis 3:1-6:** ¹ Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’” ² The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, ³ but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’” ⁴ “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. ⁵ “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” ⁶ When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.
 - Unique: _____
 - United: _____
 - Unique: _____
 - United: _____

- **Genesis 3:15:** “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”
 - United: _____

Points to Ponder

1. Think of men from your past (father, brothers, friends, boyfriends, husband, etc) and consider how safe they made you feel. Were the best protectors the best men?

2. Read Philippians 2:5-11. Why is Jesus the greatest man of all time?

3. Challenge: Men, how could you better protect, emotionally and physically, the people God has put in your life? Women, in what ways could you imitate God, the ultimate Helper, and help those in your circle of influence?

Homework for Next Week

Read 1 Corinthians chapters 11-14.

Time of Grace Ministry
God and Gender: God's Design for Men and Women (Part 2)

Genesis 1:27, 28, 2:20-22, 3:6

June 14, 2020

Pastor Mike Novotny

Do you care about God and gender as much as I do? That when God made people he made them in his image. And because God is a spirit, he doesn't have flesh and bones, we didn't inherit our heavenly Father's height or his hair color. What you got in the beginning was his holiness, his sinlessness, and his perfection.

I wonder if some of you care about those same questions? Maybe you think about your own identity: What does God want you to do with your life as a man or a woman; someone uniquely and wonderfully made? How does God want you to raise up, to train, to influence, and to disciple your sons, your daughters, your grandsons or daughters, your nieces, your nephews? What does it mean? Because we're trying to balance between these two really dangerous things in our world. In the past, we had such rigid stereotypes of what a man is and what a woman is. The Bible has zero to say about the truck you drive, about the animals that you kill, about the beer that you can brew or the beard that you can grow. That's not a man to God. In fact, you can have all that and be a man's man by our culture and be nothing like a man in the eyes of God. But you are a man if you walk into a place, a school, a family, a relationship and church and your commitment and strength makes people feel safe.

Today, in a message you're about to see, I'm going to lay that foundation from the very first pages of the Bible because God doesn't want us to feel lost or confused, he doesn't want us just to give in to cultural stereotypes or norms. He wants to tell us exactly how he made us to be; what's unique about men and woman and what brings them together and makes them united. And, most importantly, he's going to remind us who Jesus was and what he did for us.

In Genesis chapter two, God gave us a unique calling. Guys, the calling that God gave you is in an incredible picture of a rib. Men, do me a favor for a second. Put your pens down and I want you to touch your ribs for a second. I want you to think about how it feels, how it's made, and what it does. I'll tell you this - a rib is strong, it's unyielding, it's consistent, it's stable, it's reliable, and it protects - catch this - the vital things beneath it from the outside threats next to it. And that's what it means to be a man. A man is strong, he's reliable, and he is committed to stand in a position that the vital people that God puts in his life are not hurt by the threats of the outside world. The Bible has zero to say about the truck you drive, about the animals that you kill, about the beer that you can brew or the beard that you can grow. That's not a man to God. In fact, you can have all of that and be a man's man by our culture and be nothing like a man in the eyes of God. But you are a man if you walk into a place, a school, a family, a relationship, a church, and your commitment and strength makes people feel safe. If the people in your life, like a set of lungs, can breathe and they don't have to be afraid and hold their breath because you walked into the room, you're a man. If the people in your life, the woman that you're dating, the one that you're married to, the kids that you're raising can do their job like a heart and beat, that

vital organ that God put within us without having to fear that something unsafe is going to get them, you're a man.

And guys, that is the identity that we're going to unpack in the weeks to come. We're going to ask ourselves the question, when we walk into a room, does it get safer and do people breathe easier? From the way that we use our words, the way that we use our fists, the way that we view sex, the way that we spend money, what we do spiritually with our church and our family, do people feel safe and secure? And it doesn't matter if you're married or you're single, doesn't matter if you have kids or not, when you walk into the school hallway, do people breathe easy? When you step into the room for the meeting, do people relax? When you come home from work, does everyone know it's going to get a little bit better? That's what God means when he made a man.

And you've seen that this is true, right? What happens historically and globally when men forget to be a rib? When like they snap in selfishness and their jagged edges attack the vulnerable people in their lives? I'll tell you what - historically, women and children, especially, get hurt. And what happens when men are strong like ribs? They get helped. Churches, families, relationships thrive when men remember to be ribs. And guys, I have a thousand words I'd like to preach to you right now but I don't have time for that so you've got to come back for the next two weeks. We're going to talk about what this has to mean for our church and for our family to embrace the calling that God has given. But for now, I just want you to ask yourself that question: Do people feel protected and safe and at peace because I showed up?

And women, you have an essential calling, too. I hope you don't miss this word; it is golden for your identity. It said in verse 20: "But for Adam, the man, no suitable helper was found." Ladies, your calling from God is to be a helper. And some of you are smiling at me right now because you're like, "No, no, no, no. I want something better than to be a helper," but please, do not paste our terrible 21st century American definition to this ancient Jewish word. Do you know who gets the title helper in the entire Old Testament? God. I think the only person in the 39 books of the Old Testament who was ever called a helper besides the woman is God. Just think what that implies! If someone says, "Help me," you have to be available and selfless and strong and have something to offer. You're not like the help, the kitchen staff, the maid to clean after a man's mess. A man, simply put, needs help. That's what the Bible says! For Adam, no suitable helper was found. God made all the animals and the dog could be his best friend but he needed something more. He needed a heart to beat because women, without you, we guys are a bunch of dry ribs and the vultures of this world will pick us apart. But if you use your verbal ability, your mental strength, your experiences and your faith to help us, the world gets better.

And I can't wait to talk to you about what that means in marriage and in church and in life. But for now, ladies, just keep asking yourself this question: When I show up, does it get better? Do people get helped? When I come into the room, do my words help? Does my presence help? Ephesians chapter four says, "Let no unwholesome talk come out of your mouths but only what is helpful for building others up." Women are so often an incredible gift to men to encourage them, to literally put courage inside of them, because ladies, we can generally out lift you but we can't live without you.

And there are exceptions to all of these things, right? Like the modern American pushback is that we want, you know, everyone to be so individual that we forget about these helpful scripts; these stereotypes that Scripture and science has given for a reason. I speak more words than my wife. On the average car ride, I probably get 92 words for every eight because she just likes to listen and I like to talk. And not too long ago, I got in an arm wrestling match with a very petite female friend of mine and she came this close to beating me. I was wrestling, struggling, as all the guys in the room were like, "Come on, dude, like step up for us." And I just barely beat her, which was a really good thing because the baby she had just given birth to was crying and she, you know, there are exceptions to every rule but we can't forget how God made us. In the beginning, he designed us uniquely and he united us in our mission and we have different callings and we ask different questions. And in the beginning, when God laid that out, no one complained and no one objected and God himself, who was the definition of right and wrong, he looked back and he said, "No, that's good. That is so good." And they lived in love and unity and peace and no one was ashamed and no one was afraid.

So what happened? I mean, why's this so tense for us? If all this is good and God says it's good, why do we cringe and wish we could erase that part and add those words? Check out Genesis chapter three. "Now the serpent said to the woman," "The woman said to the serpent." "The serpent said to the woman," "When the woman saw," "She took some and ate it."

Anything missing? I see two things: The man and God. The first woman in an act of foolish independence thought she could do it by herself. She faced the Father of Lies and she was going to be strong but she wasn't strong enough and she got tricked. She didn't ask her husband for help, she didn't cry out to God in prayer, she just went forward and tried to handle it but she couldn't handle it. But before you blame the fall into sin on the female, there's a twist to this story. It's in the very ending of verse six. Look what it says: "The woman also gave some to her husband who was with her and he ate it." And you wish you could see the video footage of this, don't you? Wait, he was with her? The devil said and then she said and the devil said and she saw and he was just there? And the answer is yes, he was. When the world was about to fall apart, when his wife's heart was being attacked by darkness itself, the man just stood there.

And in this telling story, we see a temptation that has uniquely affected men and women throughout the ages. If you're taking notes in your program, I'd say it this way: That there's a unique temptation that many men and many women face. Guys, for us the temptation is almost always to the two extremes. There are some men who will abuse their physical advantage and they will be aggressive and violent and abusive. They'll use the strength of their words, their presence, their muscles, their personality and they will hurt women. Eighty-five percent of domestic abuse cases in America are male on female violence. And yet, I would say there's an equal, if not even greater, problem. Not the overly aggressive man but the totally passive one who like that first man is just there. He's the guy who doesn't have a plan, he doesn't have a drive, he doesn't have a clue, and he doesn't have a goal. He wants to be a rock star at Rocket League, he wants to be the last man standing at Fortnite and he'll pick up a video game in his hand and he'll fight for the kingdom but he will not fight for the things that actually matter. He'll be clueless. His mother will have to drag him to church until he's independent enough to decide to be an idiot on his own. He'll date a girl who will beg God that her man would actually pray, actually lead, actually read a Bible study for the kids but he will care more about the temporal

things of his job than the eternal soul of his kids. He'll be so dumb that he'll go to the weight room day after day, he'll put supplements in his body to get strong while his very soul is weak. And it kills us.

The fall into sin made men stupid and we go to the gym every day but we don't go to God. And we think a woman's going to be impressed with how much we bench instead of the actual plan we have for life. I've got to tell you guys, what kills us, what kills our church, is the sins of men. They're weak, they're passive, they're absent, and they'll fight for our country but they'll not fight for the things that last forever.

But women are tempted, too. Like that first woman, Eve? A woman's temptation so often is that she tries to fill the void. She has an idea, she has the words, she has the plan, and she does. She doesn't stop, she doesn't submit, she doesn't ask, she doesn't listen, she just does. She assumes that she's competent and independent enough that she doesn't need anyone to help but ladies, it does not work that way. A heart without a rib gets hurt. Ask any girl who grew up without a good dad and she will tell you that life is not that simple. It sounds good in a pop song and a great mantra to say to yourself in the morning but we need each other by God's design and there is no other path. The devil knew the temptation of men, the temptation of women. He deceived them both and as a result, sadly, we were united in sin. Both man and woman disobeyed God and they ran from him. They hid in their shame and when God sought them out in love, they pointed fingers, they excused it, he blamed it on her, a sin that men have repeated countless times in human history. She blamed it on someone else, the devil, and not her own weakness. And God with the broken heart of the Father, he said there would be consequences. Actually, those consequences would be unique. To the woman, he said, "You're going to desire a family. You're wired relationally but now you're going to have kids and it's going to hurt." And every little baby, that bundle of joy, is going to make you scream in pain. And in this really telling verse in Genesis where God says to Eve, "Your desire will be for your husband." Like, you'll still want a man, you'll want the relationship, you'll want to be loved but do you know what it says next? "Your desire will be for your husband and he will rule over you." A woman would ache to find a man like Adam used to be; a strong, selfless, protective rib who would take the hit so that the heart would be okay and it would be hard to find. Instead, she'd find a million men who would say all the right things to get in her pants. A guy who would refuse to commit and drag her along for months, if not years. A guy who would put energy into everything but their relationship and she would not feel safe. Do you know the last time the word "rule" is used before Genesis three? For what Adam was supposed to do with the animals. And because of the fall into sin, many men instead of treating women as fellow people united in the image of God, they would treat them sometimes worse than their own pets.

The world fell apart and as a result, man and woman were united in brokenness. Life got hard that day and it's been that way ever since. And even today, we struggle. We struggle with our bodies, we struggle with our identity, we struggle with our relationships and our churches, we struggle to be happy and safe and protected and helpful; the things outside of us, even the things within us, like it's not right. We were created in the high image of a holy God but when we fell, the gender got shattered into pieces.

But there's one more blank on that screen and thank God for that blank. The man and the woman were united in sin and they broke God's commandment but do you know what God did next? He helped because their sins, there were many, but God's mercy, it was so much more. God looks the devil in the face, the one who had messed up his son and his daughter, and in Genesis 3:15 he said these words: "Satan, I will put enmity," that's like conflict or strife, "between you and the woman." She's not going to be on your team; I'm going to get her back. "And between your offspring and hers. He will crush your head, Satan, and you will strike his heel." As Adam and Eve were cowering and broken and feeling so ashamed, what did God say? He said "He." There will be a he. A he who was born of a she. A man born of a woman and he will get hurt by the devil. The devil would strike his heel and yet, what would this he do? He'd crush its head. And do you know what that's the first promise of? Jesus. And if you're taking notes, write it down, star it, circle it, and find your hope through it. What unites us, both men and women, is the promise of Jesus. That he came into the world to crush our sin, our regret, and our shame. That when as men we look back on our lives and we realize how much of this we messed up, how many people we didn't protect, we can turn to Jesus and he crushes every sin and he fights for us. When you as women realize how many words and choices and attitudes weren't helpful, didn't lift up, didn't encourage, you look to Jesus and he makes everything new and beautiful and pure because Jesus is the perfect man. He is the righteous rib. He is the one who was bruised on a cross so we can be blessed. He is the one who's broken so that we can be part of the body of Christ. He is the groom who sacrificed his life so his bride might live and every time Jesus walks into the room, what can his people do? Exhale, because he makes it better. He always makes it better.

And he also embodies the perfect values of a woman because when he speaks, he helps. The words of Jesus, the very word of Jesus in this book, helps. And when we feel afraid that we messed up too much, Jesus helps. And when we feel afraid that the world is just too messed up, Jesus helps. And when relationships are so hard and we don't know if we can make it work and then church is a mess and we've got to figure it all out, Jesus speaks and he helps and he will always be with us and he will always forgive us and that is what unites us; the promise of Jesus. You can be one of the 3.89 billion men on planet earth or the 3.82 billion women but here's the truth: All of us are children of God through faith in Jesus Christ.

I wish I had more time to tell you what that means but that's what next week is for. And if you wonder how this works in the church, you've got to come back. And if you want what God wants a relationship to look like, you've got to come back the next week. And if you wonder what a Christian should think about transgender questions and the confusion and the dysphoria, you have to come back the week after that. But for now, let me just say this: In the beginning, God made us uniquely beautiful. But when humanity united in their rebellion against our heavenly Father, he made a promise. One promise of one Savior. And that's why we're about to sing together and my voice might be lower than yours, you bases might be standing next to sopranos, you might be a son of God or a daughter, but we will join our voices and we will sing and pray one prayer because of one Savior. There is one cross, one empty tomb, one hope, and one joy. His name is Jesus Christ. And however God made you, he made you to find everything in him. So let's pray.

God, thank you for your love. Thank you that you're so beautifully persistent in pursuing us. Thank you, God, that when we were proud and we walked away and turned our backs, you didn't let us go. You came chasing like a good father after your prodigal sons and daughters and that's why we love you and, Father, that's why we trust you. It is so tempting to think that our little corner of human history and our tiny part of the globe, our modern American culture knows better than you. God, that is so tempting, but when we look at the cross help us to resist that temptation and to trust you. To lean not on our own understanding but to trust in the Lord with all of our heart.

God, I pray today for good men. I pray that I could be a good man. I pray that after this message, I could walk back into my home and treat my bride like Jesus treats me and treat my daughters like you treat them. That I would value them as much as you did when you knit them together in my wife's womb. I pray for every man that walks out of these doors wherever he might go, single or married, that he would be strong. That you would send your Holy Spirit to make him selfless and sacrificial; that he would take the hit and be broken so that the people in his life could be blessed and safe.

And I pray for every word that comes out of the mouth of every woman that's here. Let it be helpful, God. Let it encourage, give hope, strength, and lead the people in your life to Jesus. Because God, if we can do that, male and female, pursue the cross together, this will not be a tension. It will be the beautiful design that you always intended it to be. God, we need your help to do it so we're not asking by our own power or merit but in the name of the one Savior of us all. We pray today in Jesus' name, and all of God's sons and daughters who agreed, they joined their voices and they said Amen.