



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 1”

November 29th, 2009
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Informed. Insightful. Intelligent.



The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 1

Genesis 1:27

27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

We attend Church to obtain the mind of Christ, meaning, to have the Bible illuminated in our minds so that we can clearly understand the principles that Jesus taught and base our daily personal decisions on those principles.

We come to Church because we want to be obedient to the Bible, which is the doctrine of Jesus Christ, in an informed, insightful and intelligent manner.

In our next Biblical study, we are going to explore the design of the male and female genders. We will explore the functions, similarities and differences of the male and female from the perspective of God's Biblical design principles. And we will use this exploration to understand long how our beautiful partners of the fair sex have impacted Biblical history.

In our text for today, which is the first passage of Scripture in which gender is mentioned, God tells us that He created man in His own image. The Hebrew word for man used is Adam, which is a noun in the neuter case. The neuter case does not differentiate characteristics; it does not refer to the different parts of a subject, but rather to the subject as a whole.

In the "a" clause of this verse, the Bible says that **God created man**, and in the "c" clause, the Bible is still referring to man as it says, **male and female He created them.**

God confirms this in the first clause of the next verse, **Genesis 1:28**, which says:

28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply,"

Neither man nor woman can reproduce independently of one another; the call to be fruitful and multiply requires the cooperation of both genders. It then logically follows that the rest of the admonitions in **Genesis 1:28**, to subdue the earth and take dominion over every living thing on the earth also applies equally to both the man and the woman.

The point that these verses make is that neither human gender is designed as a single, self-sufficient entity. God Himself is a multi-part entity, and **Genesis 1:28** tells us that man is created in two parts because we are created in God's image. God refers to Himself as "Us" and "Our" in **Genesis 1:26**, which says:

26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of



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the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

The “Us” to which God refers in **Genesis 1:26** is specified in **Matthew 28:19**:

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Theologians refer to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as the Godhead. God the Father is the part of God that designed the universe and the one that executes His will upon it, God the Son is Jesus Christ, the part of God that came to us to save us from our sins, and God the Holy Spirit is the part of God that came to empower the disciples and us with the ability to carry out that which God the Father planned and God the Son, Jesus Christ, instructed us. Literally, the Godhead is a cooperative coalition that interacts with man to empower us to execute the plan of the God for our lives. The point that these verses make is that God designed man as a cooperative coalition of male and female, just as He is a cooperative coalition Himself.

The first two takeaway points from this sermon are that neither human gender is designed as a single, self-sufficient entity and that God designed man as a cooperative coalition, just as He is Himself.

Our study is about the design of gender. I understand the concept of design in part because during my secular career, I spent some time as a computer programmer. A computer program is a series of instructions, much like the commandments that God gives us, that makes the computer perform a certain action or solve a certain problem. Before a computer programmer can produce a program, he must first design the program, meaning that he must map out a method to perform the function or solve the problem that he wishes the computer program to solve. As a part of his design, the programmer figures out the steps that the computer needs to take and the order in which the computer needs to execute them to complete the task. The programmer then writes down detailed step by step instructions, using language created specifically for computer programming, to instruct the computer as to what should be done.

The computer programmer is assured that his instructions will be followed by the computer because the computer cannot deviate from the instructions that it is given. If the computer fails to solve the act according to the program design, the programmer knows that either there is a problem with the computer hardware or the design of the program is incorrect. If, for instance, I write a program that instructs the computer to display green on the screen and no green appears when I run the program, I know that either the hardware is broken so that it can't display green or my program is written incorrectly. I can figure out whether the problem is in the hardware or in the program, fix that which needs to be fixed, after which the computer will display green with great electronic accuracy.



But the most popular type of computer program is not designed to solve a specific problem, but is designed to provide an environment so that users, which are people other than programmers, can perform tasks on the computer.

Microsoft Word, for instance, is designed to provide an environment for writing,

The person that uses Word can produce whatever he wants with that environment. I write sermons with Microsoft Word, while others use Microsoft Word to write instructions for making bombs. Microsoft Word is not designed to only produce a particular type of text, but rather to provide an environment on a computer, as paper and pencil used to provide, to facilitate personal communication via the written word.

The point is that which God created is not designed to solve a specific problem, but to provide an environment in which we users can perform a specific function, much like Microsoft Word. The Bible is the users' manual for the perfect functional environment that God's programming has created. In the first twenty-five verses of Genesis chapter one, God chronicles His design of this perfect environment, day and night, dry land and seas, grass, seed bearing herbs and fruit trees, fish and birds, cattle and insects. Then, in **Genesis 1:26:**

26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

In **Genesis 1:26**, God gave us dominion as part of His design. Dominion means that God allows us to use the perfect environment that He programmed to create that which we want just as Microsoft Word allows us to create any type of word document that we want. Dominion implies that we have choice, meaning that we can try things and if we don't like the results, we can try something different to satisfy our preference.

For example, last year, when Marie and I were trying to lose weight, Marie told me that we were more likely to be successful if we ate fish rather than hamburgers. So, I went to the fish place on Martin Luther King just north of Holmes road and bought some fried fish for us. Neither Marie nor I particularly cared for the taste of the fish, so I didn't buy any more fish from them. One day, I was travelling down Edgewood Boulevard, saw a fish place in a strip mall, and decided to try their fish. It was delicious, and so I started buying fish from them on a regular basis. But one day, I went to Edgewood Boulevard to buy fish, but the place was closed. A few days later, I passed the place again and it was open, so I went in to get some fish. I didn't recognize the fellow behind the counter, and when I ordered the fish, he mentioned to me that the place was under new management. "Oh", I replied, "are you using the same recipe for the batter that the previous owners did?"

"No", he responded, "our recipe is much better. You'll love it,"



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“Okay”, I replied”. I ordered a small order of fish and took it home. It was terrible. I haven’t been back since. I found out since then that if I really wish to lose weight, I should buy vegetables and help my wife as she cooks them for me at home.

Were I simply part of the environment, like Microsoft Word, the taste of the fish would not be an issue for me. Microsoft Word doesn’t have any personal preference; you can use it to write whatever you want. Microsoft Word is simply a set of instructions that creates an environment for writing. I, on the other hand, am not a program. I am not just part of the environment. The point is that God designed me to have dominion over His environment, and I can use my dominion over God’s environment to do that which I wish, within God’s constraints. Dominion allows me to exercise my personal preference.

But just as God created the environment, He also created me, and gave me an objective to achieve. Since I have dominion, God doesn’t give me step by step instructions as to how to achieve the objectives that He has assigned me, but rather, He gives me the parameters of the environment, which He calls wisdom, that I can use to achieve my objective. I can use the environment that God designed, as one would use Microsoft Word, to write my own document to achieve the objective that God has given me, which prepares me to take on greater responsibility in His Kingdom. The point is that, by design, God does not want to do all of the programming Himself, but He wants me to participate.

When combined with the previous takeaway point, our new takeaway point is that God has designed man as the cooperative coalition of male and female so that man can successfully achieve the objective that God has given us to exercise dominion over the earth. God did not design me, a male, as an independent programmer, but as part of a cooperative coalition, and He plans that my female partner and I achieve His objective to develop wisdom and maturity together as part of one another. In order to grow and prepare for greater responsibility in God’s Kingdom, males and females must learn to function cooperatively.

I talked about the difference in the function of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. The Three have three sets of responsibilities, three arenas of action, three types of roles, all within one cooperative coalition. The Father is the planner of the entire enterprise. The Son manifested Himself to us physically, bringing us the plan of God as He walked and talked to us as a human being. The Spirit manifests Himself to us intellectually from His invisible vantage point within our minds, reminding and empowering us to follow the commandments that we have already been given. The three function cooperatively to achieve their desired objective.

God designed us to emulate Him by functioning cooperatively with one another. Paul uses the example of our own bodies to explain to us, in **1Corinthians 12:12, 14-19:**



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12 For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.

14 For in fact the body is not one member but many.

15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body?

16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body?

17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling?

18 But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.

19 And if they were all one member, where would the body be?

Each part of the body has a different function, but the body is one, which tells us that the plan of God is unity within diversity. Within every entity that God creates He intends that there be unity within diversity. **Genesis 1:27-28** tells us: **27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.**

28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Since neither the male nor the female can fruitfully multiply independently from the other, the call to be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth requires the cooperation of both the man and the woman. The semicolon between the three clauses of the verse indicates the unity of the verse; just as we are to cooperatively be fruitful and multiply, we are to cooperatively fill and subdue the earth and cooperatively have dominion over every living thing that moves on the earth. Our takeaway point is that God has designed man as the cooperative coalition of male and female so that man can successfully achieve the objective that God has given us to exercise dominion over the earth, developing wisdom and knowledge in preparation for further responsibility in heaven.

Understand that our takeaway point flies directly in the face of the thinking of our current culture. The feminist movement postulates that females are universally oppressed by males and that females should fight oppression by refusing to participate cooperatively in marital relationships. The homosexual movement postulates that inherent conflicts between members of the opposite sex makes normal sexual relationships unfulfilling, and that same sex sexual relationships should be recognized as an acceptable alternative. Those that practice the sin of pedophilia believe that fornication is the most fulfilling sexual practice and that children are the best sex partners. Interestingly, many of our court judges are sympathetic to this thinking, based upon their acceptance of the sexualization of children and their reluctance to protect children from pedophiles. The pornographic industry postulates that actual male/female relationships can



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easily be replaced by virtual ones, and the distribution of pornographic video has become the largest use of internet bandwidth in the country. The entertainment industry has been attacking the institution of marriage since the 1970's, when the paradigm for male/female relationships shown on the both the small and silver screens changed from married couples to adulterous and promiscuous relationships, both homosexual and heterosexual. There are thousands of examples that I could cite, but let me speak of just three. The sitcom genre began in earnest with "Mash" from 1972 to 1983, which focused sympathetically on the promiscuity of the doctors that were away from their wives in Korea. The sitcom "Cheers", which ran in prime-time from 1982 to 1994, was rated 77th out of 77 prime time shows at the end of its' first season, but as the show became more risqué, its' ratings improved and it reached #1 in the Neilson ratings in the 1990-1991 season. As television shows based upon adultery and promiscuity became chart toppers, adultery and promiscuity became prime time television staples, notably with the immoral series "Friends", which was a situation comedy aimed at young adults which had, as a total focus, the glorification of fornication. "Friends" dominated prime-time television programming from 1994 to 2004, ranking as the 8th most popular show in its' first season of 1994, 1st in its' eight season, and never lower than 5th in any season after the first season that it ran. Movies have also been on the cutting edge of immorality. Immorality on the silver screen has reached the point in which there is virtually no movie produced rated PG-13 or higher that does not have a scene exhibiting nudity or sexuality between unmarried people.

Genesis chapter 1 laid down the intellectual framework for our takeaway point. **Genesis** chapter 2 lays down the historical framework for our takeaway point. **Genesis 2:18** tells us:

18 And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."

My study of the Bible makes it clear to me that helpers are not necessarily inferior to those whom they help. God designates the Holy Spirit as our Helper, as the Holy Spirit is tasked with reorienting our thinking so that we can participate with God in His plan. **John 14:26** tells us:

26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

Although God the Holy Spirit is my Helper, He is certainly not inferior to me. The Biblical designation of helper most accurately means one who helps, and based upon the parallel between the Godhead and man that we have previously postulated, the phrase "helper comparable to him" in **Genesis 2:18** refers to a helper who is equal to the man that God first created and that can cooperatively coordinate activities with the man to reach God's objective. Thus,



the designation of helper in **Genesis 2:18** does not imply that the man's helper will be inferior to him. We can see this in the next two verses, **Genesis 2:19-20**:
19 Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name.
20 So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.

Due to the animal's' lack of ability to think and communicate on an equal intellectual plain with the man, none of the animals were comparable to the man. Since our assignment on earth is to exercise dominion and grow in the ability to be responsible so that we can handle a greater responsibility in God's Kingdom, the animals' designed lack of intellectual capacity makes them unsuitable for the assignment of helper. Animals can provide brawn but not brain, so they are unsuitable as helpers. So the account continues, in **Genesis 2:21-23**:

21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place.

22 Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.

23 And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."

When the man surveyed that partner that God created for him, he saw that the woman, unlike the animals, had the cognitive and communication ability to cooperate with him in both making decisions and physical work. God created the woman specifically to be the man's counterpart.

The next verse, **Genesis 2:24**, is not part of the previous quotation from Adam, but in this verse God Himself specifies that the unity between male and female is intended to be analogous to that between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, as God says:

24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

The divine design of God for the genders is most completely expressed in this verse. To emulate the Godhead, we need to join with and become one with our partner both in terms of making decisions and physical work. In our last takeaway point, I made it clear that God has designed man as the cooperative coalition of male and female so that man can successfully achieve the objective that God has given us to exercise dominion over the earth, developing wisdom and knowledge in preparation for further responsibility in heaven. After quoting **Genesis 2:24**, I can augment our takeaway point to say that God has designed man as the cooperative coalition of husband and wife so that man can successfully achieve the objective that God has given us to exercise dominion



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over the earth, developing wisdom and knowledge in preparation for further responsibility in heaven.

The call for a permanent, monogamous relationship between husband and wife is the most pervasive, foundational doctrine in the Bible, after that of the forgiveness of sin by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Jesus did not found an organization with any discernable power structure, as did the scribes and Pharisees that persecuted Him. Jesus' followers followed Him on an ad-hoc basis, and Jesus often sent those that He healed back to their families, although they asked to become His followers. The Christian church grew and eventually took over the Roman Empire through the conversion of individuals rather than a political program that influenced the state. Jesus himself worked through the influence of families rather than through a discernable political structure.

Jesus quoted and augmented **Genesis 2:24** when the Jewish religious leaders challenged Him because of His doctrine on divorce. **Matthew 19:3-6** records:

3 The Pharisees also came to [Jesus], testing Him, and saying to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?"

4 And [Jesus] answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,'

5 and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh' ?

6 So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

The Hebrew society had a long standing tradition that a husband could divorce his wife if he was unsatisfied with her for any reason, so they questioned Jesus, in **Matthew 19:7**:

7 [The Pharisees] said to [Jesus], "Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?"

In the Law of Moses, **Deuteronomy 24:1** says that a man can divorce his wife if he finds "some uncleanness" in her, without any further specification. There is no question that the Law of Moses allows divorce for reasons that appear to lack definition. But Jesus clarifies the reason that God put divorce provisions in the Mosaic Law and the meaning of "some uncleanness" in **Matthew 19:8-9**:

8 [Jesus] said to them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. 9 And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery."

God permitted the Jews to divorce because of their hard-hearted immaturity, and the definition of "uncleanness" that God had in mind was sexual unfaithfulness on the part of the wife. Jesus' answer to the Pharisees backs up



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the conclusion of our takeaway point that God has designed man as the cooperative coalition of husband and wife so that man can successfully achieve the objective that God has given us to exercise dominion over the earth, developing wisdom and knowledge in preparation for further responsibility in heaven.

Marriage is the primary relationship of man, and in **Genesis 2** is the first relationship mentioned in the Bible. Marriage is also the last relationship mentioned in the Bible, as **Revelation 21** refers to the church as the bride of Jesus Christ. This simile is appropriate because just as husbands and wives are created to be a cooperative coalition with one another, the church was created to be a cooperative coalition with God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in order to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those that do not know Him in the pardon of their sins.

The influences of the feminist movement, the homosexual movement, organized pedophiles, the pornographic industry, and those industries, including but not limited to the entertainment industry, that advocate the acceptance of promiscuity, fornication or divorce for reasons other than infidelity, oppose to God and seek to pervert man so that we do not achieve the objective of God for our lives.

We can automatically tell that the devil is at work whenever that which we see or hear undermines lifelong monogamous, heterosexual marriage, because lifelong monogamous, heterosexual marriage is the foundation of the design of God for our lives. Lifelong monogamous, heterosexual marriage is the environment that which God designed for us to fulfill His prime directive, to increase, multiply, subdue the earth and take dominion over it. Those that encourage divorce for reasons other than infidelity, feminism, homosexuality, pedophilia, promiscuity or pornography scheme to defeat the purpose of God in our lives and render us unable to that which God intends for us to do.

So, as we finish our first lesson on this topic, let us remember our takeaway point, which is that God has designed man as the cooperative coalition of husband and wife so that man can successfully achieve the objective that God has given us to exercise dominion over the earth, developing wisdom and knowledge in preparation for further responsibility in heaven, a responsibility that will be given to us by Jesus Christ, who died on the Cross so that our sins could be forgiven and that we might have the opportunity to execute the plan of God for our lives through our ministry with one another. Jesus Christ gave Himself for His bride, the Church, on Calvary, as the ultimate sign of empowerment and cooperation with us, and expects husbands and wives to cooperate with one another even as He gave Himself in cooperation with us.

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