



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 8”

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Informed. Insightful. Intelligent.



The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 8

Genesis 18:13-14

13 And the LORD said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh, saying, ‘Shall I surely bear a child, since I am old?’

14 Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.”

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.

Our takeaway point in this series on the Biblical Design of Gender 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 our eternal life.

Money has been on my mind, and on the minds of many as our nation's economy has gone down for the last year or so.

One way to make money is a job. People with non-management jobs generally don't worry about their company's balance sheet. If an employee works in a production or service capacity, their job may not be directly related to the company's financial performance. The non-management employee's priorities are getting his favorite work schedule, the best wages and benefits that he can, and keeping the boss from bugging him too much. The company's financial performance is only of interest to the employee if there is talk about layoffs or downsizing. A non-management job may not involve any personal creativity and be a passive, low risk, relatively low reward situation.

Another way to make money is by investing. People that live from their investments must accumulate enough capital to invest, decide which investments to buy to receive a good return, and then decide when to sell to maximize profit or minimize losses. If the investment selected does not do well, the investor can and will lose money. Most successful investors have lost large sums of money; losses are the tuition that investors pay to learn how to invest. But investors own their own business and have a greater earning potential than employees. Successful investing requires personal creativity and faith in oneself, and is an active, high risk, high reward situation.

Interestingly, God gives us the choice to live in either the passive, low risk style or the active, high risk style. People living the low risk style are generally not



preparing for further responsibility in eternal life, because eternal life is not a reality to them. The low risk lifestyle worships the physical and social sciences as god and denies the power of the God of Heaven. For example, a lady with whom I conversed on Facebook was concerned that the increase in world population, which is suppose to triple by 2025, would cause mankind to run out of food and water. She said that she read a “study” that indicated that this would be the case, and so she “knew” that it was true. The “world is coming to an end, what are we going to do” scenario is the passive perspective of someone focused on the physical. But I responded to her with the faith filled, high risk, high reward perspective of an investor that knows God:

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. God has given us enough natural resources to conquer, change or control any earthly situation, and He has also given us dominion over the earth, which means that we have the responsibility to figure out how to use the resources He has given us to increase and multiply, which is His prime directive for us. Since God is telling us to increase and multiply, it is the devil who is telling us that we can’t do so. But the devil is a liar.

God has created a cyclical universe. He tells us, in **Genesis 8:22**:
22 “While the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest, Cold and heat, Winter and summer, And day and night shall not cease.”

Everything on earth, including the ingenuity of man, is on a growth cycle. Our faith in the Word of God should be as well. Man discovered transistors, which are the building blocks of computers, in 1925, and has learned to develop transistor technology to the point that now the number of transistors that we can put on an integrated circuit doubles every two years. The price of computer technology is virtually in free fall. That is why in 1995, I paid \$1,000 for a computer with 512 megabytes of processor memory and an 80 gigabyte hard drive and last year I paid \$700 for a computer with four times as much capacity. My point is that there are enough resources of every kind on earth that we do not have to conserve, because every resource is cyclical. If the population triples by 2025, we simply have to triple food and water production as well, and since God has given us dominion over the earth, we can develop processes to grow food and create water of which you have never heard, just as people never heard of cell phones in 1972.

Everything on earth, including the ingenuity of man, is on a growth cycle. Our faith in the Word of God should be as well. People predict doom, gloom, shortages and even the end of the world all of the time, but their predictions are lies from Satan. The Bible says that we will be here until Jesus comes back. Our belief in God also lets us know that if a problem arises that is actually beyond our capacity to handle, we can call on the Lord in prayer and He will intervene in accordance with His Word.



We have been discussing God's intervention in the lives of Abraham and Sarah. The Lord told Abraham that he would have a son by Sarah, although Abraham and Sarah were 100 and 90 years old respectively. In this lesson, God repeats his prophecy so that Sarah can hear it. He appears to Abraham in the form of a man, with two angels as escorts, and Abraham and Sarah prepared a meal for God and the angels. In **Genesis 18:9-10**:

9 Then [God and the two angels] said to [Abraham], "Where is Sarah your wife?" So he said, "Here, in the tent."

10 And [God] said, "I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and behold, Sarah your wife shall have a son." (Sarah was listening in the tent door which was behind him.)

God prophesied that in nine months, ninety-year-old Sarah would have a baby boy. Now, let me explain the problem.

To create a child, a male provides the seed cell which is implanted in a fertile egg cell provided by a female. Human females do not produce eggs as they mature; females are born with all of the eggs that they are ever going to have. When females get to a certain age, sometime during their adolescence, their eggs begin becoming fertile so that the females can have children. But a female's eggs are not refrigerated, and they only last for so long. As a woman ages, the woman either uses her eggs to have children or her eggs age and lose their fertility. After a certain number of years, the woman runs out of eggs that can become fertile, after which she is no longer able to have children. Sarah ran out of eggs about thirty years before God and the angels showed up, and so, from a human standpoint, it was impossible for Sarah to become pregnant.

Normally, a human pregnancy is a passive, relatively low risk procedure. For a woman to get pregnant past the age that her eggs are generally fertile is a much higher risk procedure. In the 1970's doctors began specializing in female fertility and developed techniques to can harvest an fertile egg from one woman and implant the donated egg in another woman that wants to have a baby. Recently, a woman over sixty years of age became pregnant as a result of this procedure. But whether a woman becomes pregnant in the normal fashion or by the extraordinary method of egg donation and implantation, a viable egg has to be produced by some woman in order for a woman to become pregnant.

Abraham and Sarah were familiar with the facts of normal childbearing, and although they believed in God enough to leave their home and family to go to a new land at the behest of God, when it came to childbearing, they had the passive perspective of someone focused on the physical. But God is able to simply create eggs in women that have no eggs without obtaining donor eggs from another woman, just as He created the heavens and the earth.

In **Genesis 18:11-12**:

11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in age; and Sarah had passed the age of childbearing.



12 Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, “After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?”

To Sarah, God’s pronouncement was so ridiculous as to be funny. For a ninety-year old woman who had been infertile all of her life to have a child is a joke. Maybe Sarah could have believed that God could prolong her fertility had she been fertile earlier in her life, but Sarah lived with a lifetime of disappointment because of her infertility and figured that she had about as much chance to have a child as Abraham did. Sarah was mature enough to turn her disappointment into humor rather than pouting. But God gave Sarah one of the most profound statements in the Bible, in **Genesis 18:13-14**:

13 And the LORD said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh, saying, ‘Shall I surely bear a child, since I am old?’

14 Is anything too hard for the LORD?

And that is the question. Is anything too hard for the Lord? Is there any earthly condition in which God cannot intervene?

God gives us dominion over every physical process on the earth. We can discover the root condition that causes pregnancy and transfer a pregnancy from a fertile woman to an infertile one. But the key to our faith in God is the recognition that God transcends the physical; He can do anything, whether there is a physical basis for it or not.

Sarah’s skepticism about God’s Word is not unique. The disciples shared it. **Matthew 16:21-23** tells us:

21 From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.

22 Then Peter took [Jesus] aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, “Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!”

23 But [Jesus] turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”

Peter, the leader of the disciples, had just been given the revelation by the Holy Spirit that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God, and made that revelation known to the other disciples, but as Jesus was making this prophesy, Peter’s ears heard “and be killed” and stopped listening. The part about “being raised the third day” completely escaped Peter because Peter was stuck on the physical capabilities of man, and, as far as Peter was concerned, once a man dies physically, that is the end of his earthly existence.

Just as the lady knows that we are going to run out of food in 2025, and Sarah knew she couldn’t get pregnant, Peter knew that Jesus, who healed the sick and raised the dead, couldn’t die. But in all three of these cases, God contradicted the people that knew better.



The key to living the active, high risk, high reward investor lifestyle is getting past physical limitations to have faith in God's Word and understanding, as God told Sarah, that there is nothing too hard for God. Listen to that which Jesus did, as recorded in **Mark 1:32-39**:

32 At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to [Jesus] all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed.

33 And the whole city was gathered together at the door.

34 Then [Jesus] healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew Him.

35 Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, [Jesus] went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.

36 And Simon and those who were with [Jesus] searched for Him.

37 When they found [Jesus], they said to Him, "Everyone is looking for You."

38 But [Jesus] said to them, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth."

39 And [Jesus] was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons.

Jesus had a ministry of prayer and healing. Peter saw Jesus' healing ministry, and couldn't conceive of Jesus allowing Himself to be killed, but Jesus' death, burial and resurrection, like His healing ministry, was the purpose for which Jesus came. The key to living the active, high risk, high reward investor lifestyle is getting past physical limitations to have faith in God's Word and understanding, as God told Sarah, that there is nothing too hard for God.

God can do anything. God has given us prayer so that we can ask Him to supernaturally intervene and do that which we want. The devil has taken on the job of discouraging us from praying. But God tells us, in **James 5:13-18**:

13 Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms.

14 Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.

15 And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

16 Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months.

18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced



its fruit.

Listen to the story of Elijah's prayer, as given in **1Kings 16:29-33, 17:1: 29 In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab the son of Omri became king over Israel; and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years.**

30 Now Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD, more than all who were before him.

31 And it came to pass, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; and he went and served Baal and worshiped him.

32 Then he set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal, which he had built in Samaria.

33 And Ahab made a wooden image. Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him.

1 And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word."

Ahab, the new King of Israel defied God by taking a Sidonian wife that worshipped Baal, and became a Baal worshiper himself. Elijah, the man of God, chastised the king for leading Israel into sin, and prayed that the land would become a parched place of famine so that the king would repent. Elijah called on God in prayer, and God changed the course of nature for three years and six months. So we must ask ourselves, after hearing about Sarah's baby, Elijah's famine and Jesus' resurrection: Is anything too hard for the Lord? If we believe that there is something that God can not do, we will not pray the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man, because, like Sarah, we will laugh at the idea of God's intervention. And I believe in both the natural and the supernatural, in both prayer and action, in both prayer and medical science, because although God has all power, and can do all things, He has given us dominion over the earth. God did not put a fully developed baby in Sarah's womb, but rather a viable egg. God did His supernatural part, but Abraham and Sarah had to do their natural part as well. Sarah was not the Virgin Mary, which is to say that she did not become pregnant without the intervention of her husband. After becoming pregnant, Sarah had to do that which women do to successfully carry her child to term and deliver him. But the purpose of prayer is to invoke God's power to overcome the limitations that nature imposes.

Abraham prayed for the natural rather than the spiritual, that God would allow his son of the flesh, Ishmael, to be his son of the promise. Sarah agreed with the natural and laughed when presented with the supernatural, when God told her that she would become pregnant at ninety years of age. Neither of them believed God although God spoke to them personally. But God gives us these



and other historical examples in His Word so that we can believe His Word and answer the question, “Is anything too hard for the Lord” in the negative. Our faith is not based upon what we think God is going to do, but rather that which God has already done.

Effective prayer requires faith, not necessarily emotion, although emotion may make us more fervent. Effective prayer requires understanding, in that we need to know that which the Bible tells us about our situation, and we need to be prepared for the fact that Satan is going to ridicule our prayer life, encourage us to curtail our prayers, try to put us to sleep during our prayers, cause the baby to cry, the telephone to ring, and the UPS guy to show up with a package or do anything of which he can think to distract us during our prayers. Yes, Satan will orchestrate distractions and interruptions, but we have to make a list, check off each item as we pray for it, and continue praying, despite interruptions, until we complete our prayer task. It is easier to increase our prayer effectiveness if we encourage one another to pray, pray for one another, and to discuss our faults with a view towards helping each other live a life pleasing to God,

Is anything too hard for the Lord? My position is that God can heal any condition, fix any problem and do anything that we need done to help us achieve the objective that God has given us to exercise dominion over the earth, developing wisdom and knowledge in preparation for further responsibility in our eternal life. But we have to decide our answer to God’s question to Sarah: Is anything too hard for the Lord?

I can confidently say, without fear of successful contradiction, that the answer to the question is no. **John 3:16-17** tells us:

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

When Jesus came, sin had taken over the Jewish worship experience. The priests were thieves, Temple worship was corrupted, and the religious leaders were steering people away from God by their enforcement of man made traditions rather than teaching the Word of God. If worship was better in the days of Jesus that it was in the days of Elijah, I would be hard pressed to point out the improvements. Jesus came healing the sick and raising the dead, casting our demons, cleansing lepers and teaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, and the response of the religious leadership was to look for ways to kill him.

And they were successful. Jesus died on the Cross of Calvary, as He prayed, ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do’. Even as He was dying, Jesus was praying for those that were persecuting Him. His faith and confidence in God allowed Him to give His very life, because He knew that His mission was to exercise dominion, and the way to exercise that dominion was to get past the physical into the spiritual. He died and left the physical on the Cross,



and after He rose from the dead, He entered a sealed room with locked doors in which the disciples were meeting without opening a door or window. He showed His disciples that all of His physical limitations were gone to reassure them that their lives would be improved, not damaged, if they put themselves in harm's way and preached the gospel in a hostile environment. And they did. All of the disciples, except John, voluntarily died violent deaths as did Jesus in defense of the Gospel, and their violent deaths are the historical foundation of the Church of Jesus Christ, which still exists today.

Is anything too hard for God?

If we give ourselves to prayer and the study of and faith in the Word of God, we will find that there is an unseen reality that transcends our physical world into which we can tap, and the passive, low risk, relatively low reward situation of the physical can be overcome by the active, high risk, high reward situation of the spiritual.

And Sarah, at ninety years of age, became pregnant, and had the baby.

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