



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 30”

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Informed. Insightful. Intelligent.



The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 30

Proverbs 3:12

12 For whom the LORD loves He corrects, Just as a father the son in whom he delights.

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.

On this Father's Day, we are going to depart from our Biblical chronology once again as we discuss the role of a father in a family.

When we are born into the world, our entire intellectual motivation can be summarized as "want to". At birth, our personal desires, meaning that which we want, are our only concern; we see everything in our environment as an extension of ourselves. A psychologist once told me that an infant sees his or her mother's breast as theirs, and everything in their environment as an extension of themselves. There is no human being in existence that is as self-centered as an infant.

I can remember when the lady who was my pediatrician when I was a child visited Marie and me at our home. She and her husband did not have children of their own, and so they adopted an infant, who was about two years old or so when they visited us.

The child came into our house, and, since he was able to walk, his parents put him down on the floor and allowed him to do so. I was watching him as we sat and talked. The child went over to our coffee table and picked up something that was on it. He saw that I was watching him, so he turned toward me, looked directly in my eyes, and with a serious expression, said, "Mine."

I immediately erupted in laughter. "Little boy", I said, "how is it that you can come into a place in which you have never been, pick up something that you have never seen before from a table that you didn't know existed before you first saw it two seconds ago, and say 'Mine'. How can that possibly be yours?"



However, as I said, when we are born into the world, our entire intellectual motivation can be summarized as “want to”. We do that which we “want to” do, and take that which we “want to” take from whomever we can. The little boy wanted the object, and so he claimed it. At his intellectual stage of development, he perceived everything in his environment as an extension of himself.

Interestingly, a child’s mother generally facilitates this “want to” thinking process. When the child leaves her womb, his or her safety and comfort is the mother’s primary concern, because the child has no physical or intellectual capacity to take care of his or her needs on their own. During those pre-verbal months in which the child cannot speak, the mother is the child’s conduit to the world, and meeting the child’s desires, which generally correspond with his needs, is her focus.

However, the child eventually comes to a point in which he requires that which the Bible calls discipline, or correction. **Proverbs 22:15** tells us: **15 Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of correction will drive it far from him.**

God calls the infantile “want to” propensity of a child to obtain and/or do that which he wants “foolishness”. All of us are born foolish, and God gives us a parent, a mother, whose initial job it is to indulge us while we are too young and helpless to be responsible for discerning between foolishness and wisdom. But God also gives us a parent, a father, whose job it is to override the indulgent role of mother and provide his child with correction. Our text, **Proverbs 3:12** tells us: **12 For whom the LORD loves He corrects, Just as a father the son in whom he delights.**

My major point is that there is a dichotomy in parenthood. Mothers are generally more subjective about their children; that is, they generally have a more in depth concern about the individual “want to” desires of their child. Fathers, on the other hand, are generally more objective, that is, they generally have a more in depth concern about developing the child’s “ought to” ability to conform to accepted standards.

As my wife will tell you, I’ve told this story many times, but I’ll tell it again to make my point. My wife arranged a birthday party for my son’s eighth birthday. Paul invited a group of boys, who were in our yard running, playing and chasing each other. While they were in the midst of their activity, I called my son. When he heard my voice, he stopped playing and came to where I was standing on the deck. “Sir”, I told him, “I just want you to know that you have ten more years to go. In ten years, you will have to leave this house and you will be on your own.”

Paul looked at me with a puzzled expression on his face, but before he could ask me a question, I spoke to him again. “Okay, go on”, I said, “have fun with your friends, but I just wanted to put that on your mind. Go on back to your party.”



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He looked at me for a moment, and then went back to play with his friends. But I made it a point, each year, on his birthday, to count down the number of years he had to go. When Paul was eighteen years old, he was ready to leave our house, and he became a Microsoft Certificated Systems Engineer and obtained his first job making an adult salary when he was nineteen years of age. He's been on his own ever since.

But I can tell you that if it was up to his mother, Paul would be living in our house RIGHT NOW. When Paul told his mother last year that he was going to try to move back to Lansing, she was so excited that she didn't know whether to stand still or jump up and down. And when Paul calls his mother on the telephone, it does not matter what we are doing, because she will stop doing whatever it is to talk to Paul. And Paul calls his mother often, just to tell her how his day is going.

You may remember how we laughed just a few weeks ago when Paul's mother said, during our prayer period, that she hadn't heard from Paul recently. And then she said, "not since last night". While Paul calls his mother if the wind blows, Paul calls me occasionally, if he has a question or if he wants me to do something.

Now, I don't want you to get the impression that I am complaining, because I am not. I am just explaining the difference between the relationship of a mother to her son and the relationship of a father to his son. Paul and his mother have an intensely close emotional relationship while Paul and I have a more distant relationship of objectively mutual respect. And that is the way it should be. Let me explain the reason for this dichotomy.

In the initial iteration of mankind, there were no women. There was no provision for procreation, and there was no provision for the emotional support of the man. And God recognized that the lack of emotional support was not a good situation for the man. **Genesis 2:18, 21-23** 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."

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."

Women were, and are, designed by God to be emotionally bonded to and to provide emotional support for men. **Genesis 2:24** says:

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

So the Biblically appropriate primary relationship for a man is between him



and his wife. But the Bible also specifies that the man first has to leave his father and mother to be joined to his wife.

Something happens to a woman when she has a child. We have already recounted the role of the mother and the depth of the emotional relationship between a mother and her child because of the child's total reliance upon his mother for sustenance. A woman's husband is a grown man; he can take care of himself, but a woman's child is dependent on her, both physically and emotionally, in a way that her husband is not. When my son was an infant, if my wife didn't feel like preparing a meal for me, I would not starve. But if she had refused to take care of my son, he would have. If my wife did not feel up to meeting my emotional needs, I could rationalize the situation and recognize that she was focused on taking care of my son. But my son's emotional needs were both urgent and immediate to her. An infant's needs are comprehensive and immediate, while a husband's needs are partial and can be deferred.

But not indefinitely.

Soon after the birth of her child, the wife and mother has to recognize her responsibility to reestablish her relationship with her husband to prepare her emotionally for the coming day in which some other woman is going to have the primary relationship with her son. **Genesis 2:24** still says:

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

In order for a mother to be sanguine about her son leaving his primary bond with her, and creating a new primary bond joining him with his wife, the mother needs to reestablish her primary relationship with his father, her husband. And it is the job of the father to facilitate the breakup between mother and son.

So, the father may have to do as many as three things to extricate his son from his wife, his son's mother. First of all, he has to reestablish the primary relationship between himself and his wife. Secondly, he may have to convince his wife of her responsibility to relinquish her primary relationship with her son and to turn the meeting of her son's emotional needs over to her son's wife. And he may need to convince his son of his need to bond with his wife at the cost of the closeness of his relationship with his mother. Both wives, the father's wife and the son's wife, need their own primary emotional relationship. And as we have read, God's design is that a women bond primarily with their husbands rather than with their children.

So, the father's job in the family is to provide discipline and manage relationships. The father is tasked by God to do so because he is more objective; his relationships are less emotional, thus he has a greater ability to move his family from "want to" to "ought to". And the Scripture reflects this role. The Holy Spirit tells us, in **Ephesians 5:22-24**:

22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church;



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and He is the Savior of the body.

24 Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

This passage of Scripture reflects the father's role as the leader of the relationships within his marriage. Godly leaders always have to make more objective decisions, because the leader's job is to move the organization from "want to" to "ought to". The leader cannot do that which he wants, but must do that which he ought; that which he is commanded to do by God. Jesus tells us, in **John 5:30**:

30 I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.

Even Jesus could not do that which He wanted during His earthly ministry. Jesus was not focused on "want to" but rather, "ought to", as He did not seek His own will, but that of His Heavenly Father. In the very shadow of the Cross, Jesus had to give up that which He wanted to do that which the Lord commanded. Jesus' prayer, as He was faced with the enormity of the sacrifice that would save our souls, is recorded in **Matthew 26:39**. The Bible says:

39 [Jesus] went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."

Had there been any way in God's plan for the salvation of man to be accomplished other than the Passion of the Christ, Jesus would have preferred it, but His prayer was **not as I will, but as You will**.

So the leader has to emulate Jesus and make the objective decision to do that which the Lord says to do. And the Lord admonishes husbands and fathers, in **Ephesians 5:25**:

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,

Interestingly, the love of a husband for his wife is not intended to be based solely upon a feeling. Not only did Jesus Christ not feel like going to the Cross; from the reaction of the people around Him, His going to the Cross did not yield any earthly benefits. All of Jesus' disciples, including Peter, the leader of the disciples, forsook Jesus and fled from Him, except John. The Jews, who were the people to whom Jesus was sent to save, were the ones that called for His crucifixion. The Gentiles, who currently make up the majority of the Church, were the ones that actually drove the nails into Jesus' hands and feet. Reviewing the crucifixion episode clarifies as much as any episode in history that that which Paul tells us in **Romans 3:23**:

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

But our salvation calls for sacrifice. Our salvation calls for Someone to go above and beyond the call of duty. Our salvation calls for Someone to give of



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Himself even when there appears to be no reward for doing so. Our salvation calls for Someone to be objective and to be devoted to doing the revealed will of God, regardless of that which circumstances indicate would be the most advantageous, because, as **Isaiah 40:8** tells us:

8 The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever.

If the sacrifice of Jesus Christ teaches us nothing else, it teaches us that the earthly evaluation of results does not count. From an earthly perspective, when Jesus Christ died on the Cross, Jesus Christ's enemies triumphed over Him as completely as was earthly possible. Any earthly observer surveying the crucifixion scene would have come to the conclusion that faith in Jesus Christ was misplaced faith.

But Jesus Christ was not doing the will of man. Jesus Christ was not even doing His own will. Jesus Christ, at the cost of His own life, was doing the will of God. And the fact that He lost His life on Friday did not preclude the fact that Friday was not the last day. **Matthew 28:1-8** tells us:

1 Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb.

2 And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it.

3 His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow.

4 And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men.

5 But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.

6 He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

7 And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you."

8 So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ was a result that neither the Jews, nor the Romans, nor the disciples expected. But God is able to turn certain defeat into victory. God is able to turn agonizing suffering into triumph. God is able to use the most sinful evil of man and to accomplish His will. And God's plan is that we turn "ought to" into "want to" by emulating the example of Jesus Christ and understanding the fact from the episode of His sacrifice that the race is not given to the swift, neither to the strong, but to the one that holds out to the end.

And Ephesians tells us that, as fathers and husbands, we are to emulate Jesus' example, and make decisions as the head of our families in the objective



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way that Jesus did as the head of the church, doing the will of His Father rather than his own will.

So just as Jesus Christ gave Himself as a sacrifice for those that did not appreciate Him, we as husbands and fathers are to give ourselves for our wives and our children and wives although they may wish to conform to “want to” rather than “ought to”. The Holy Spirit tells us, in **Ephesians 5:25-28**:

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,

26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,

27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.

The role of a father is the role of one who gives himself. The role of a father is one of personal sacrifice. The role of a father is one that sacrifices the emotional satisfaction of “want to” in order to instill the discipline of “ought to” into children that may not immediately appreciate the discipline. And the celebration of Father’s Day generally cannot hold a candle to the emotional outpouring of Mother’s Day, but that is as it should be.

The job of a father is to stay the course when desire and emotion would have us go in the opposite direction. The job of a father is to hold little feet to the fire and extract discipline from those who are immature and willful. **Proverbs 4:1** tells us:

1 Hear, my children, the instruction of a father, and give attention to know understanding;

Proverbs 13:1 says:

1 A wise son heeds his father’s instruction, But a scoffer does not listen to rebuke.

Proverbs 15:5 says:

5 A fool despises his father’s instruction, But he who receives correction is prudent.

Ephesians 6:4 says:

4 And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

Proverbs 22:6 says:

6 Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.

So the admonition to fathers on Father’s Day is for us to teach and model wisdom to our children. The admonition to fathers on Father’s Day is for us to love and give ourselves for our wives.



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The admonition to fathers on Father's Day is to recognize that our success is in instilling the discipline of "ought to" into ourselves and into others in our families that desire the indulgence of "want to", and recognizing that perseverance in discipline will eventually bring us to the state in which we can understand that doing that which we "ought to" brings us the emotional results that we are trying to achieve by doing that which we "want to". Jesus did that which He "ought to" rather than that which he "wanted to" on Calvary's Cross, and as a result, He became the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.

A great story of discipline is told by Jesus Christ in **Luke 15:11-16**:

11 Then [Jesus] said: "A certain man had two sons.

12 And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.' So he divided to them his livelihood.

13 And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living.

14 But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want.

15 Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

16 And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything.

The younger son found out that "want to" did not yield the results that he had hoped. Doing that which he "wanted to" led him into the rod of correction of having to eat pig's food. And that rod of correction drove his foolishness far from him, as **Luke 15:17-19** records:

17 "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you,

19 and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants." ' "

The correction of experience taught the younger son the humility that the words of the father did not. In the far country, the younger son learned the lesson that his father tried to teach him at home, and he was no longer the arrogant brat that left the father with a fortune. The son recognized the enormity of his error and his personal unworthiness. And all Our Heavenly Father wants to see from us is that we have received our correction and learned our lesson. Our Heavenly Father tells us that there is a remedy for the foolishness of sin if we seek Him, in **Romans 6:23**:

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

So the son decided to seek the remedy, as **Luke 15:20-24** tells us:



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20 “And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.

21 And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

22 “But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet.

23 And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry;

24 for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ And they began to be merry.

Regardless of how foolish we have been, our Heavenly Father loves us. He rejoices when we recognize our foolishness and when we respond to the rod of correction that He has for us. Our Heavenly Father does not hold a grudge, nor does He allow others to do so. As the episode records, there were two sons, and the older son was not as forgiving as the Father. **Luke 15:25-30** records:

25 “Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing.

26 So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant.

27 And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.’

28 “But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him.

29 So he answered and said to his father, ‘Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends.

30 But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.’

But as the younger son and the father recognize, the Father has enough and to spare for all of them. The older son did not recognize that the purpose of discipline was not for discipline’s sake, but to instill wisdom in the one being disciplined. The younger son experience in the far country made him wise enough to understand that the Father’s riches were sufficient for him, but the older son did not understand this. The older son thought that the liberality of the Father toward the younger son would impinge on his inheritance. The older son, although he was not the type of sinner as was his younger brother, was still a self-centered person. A wise son rejoices at the repentance of another, but a self-centered son wants all the glory for himself, as did the older brother. Jesus refers to such men as “white-washed tombs”, which appear to be beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of corruption and dead men’s bones.

But the father has enough for both of his sons, his hired servants, and all that are in his whole household. And those that begrudge others the blessings of



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the father have missed the point of righteousness. The father can bestow his blessings on whomever he chooses, and he has enough and to spare for everyone. There is plenty of room in the father's kingdom for all that want to move from "want to" to "ought to". So the older son has no real reason to be angry over his father's mercy to his younger brother, because the father's kingdom has enough for all of them. And the Father tells his older son, as **Luke 15:31-32** records:

31 "And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours.

32 It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.' "

And God tells us that He has enough love of all of us, in **John 3:16-17**:

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.

The amount of salvation available to us is not depleted by the number of those that take advantage of it. The Kingdom of God is large enough for all that wish to enter. **2Peter 3:9** tells us:

9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

Our Heavenly Father has enough for all of us. We just need to decide, as did the younger son, to repent of our self-centered indulgence and do that which we "ought to", rather than that which we "want to", and lead those over whom we have the charge in that same direction.

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