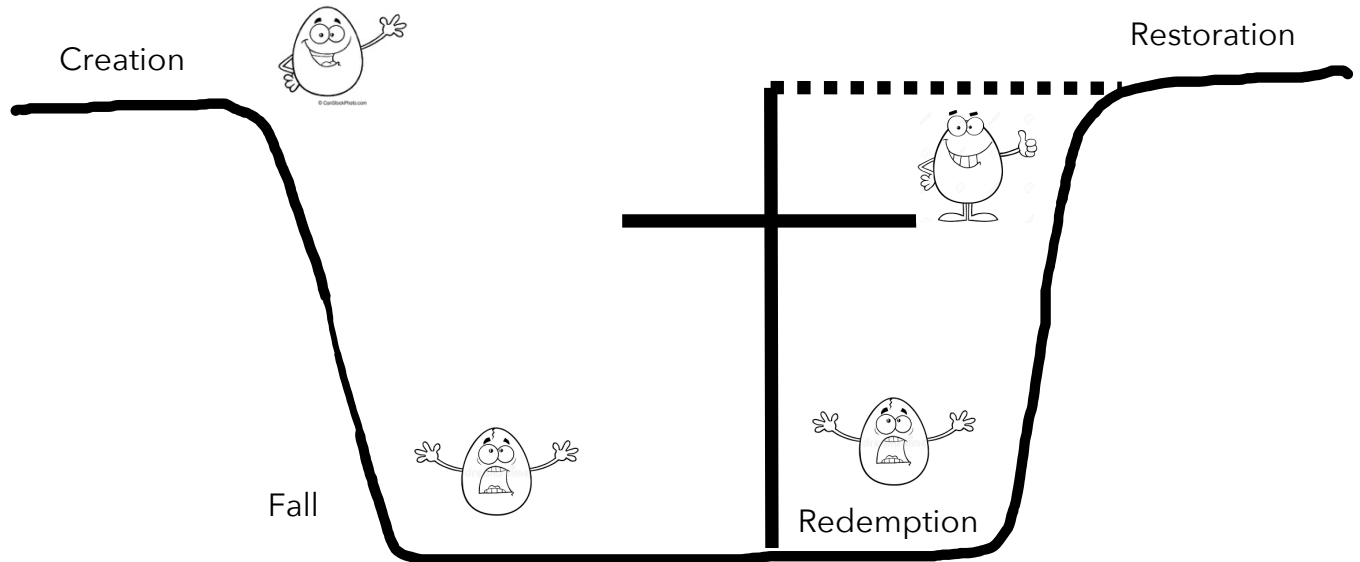


Biblical Gender, God's Good Design

YAC Crossroads, February 2022

A Quick Review...



The question we must continue to ask is: "What portion of this story am I / are we living within?"

Defining Terms

Sex

Sexually Dimorphic

Gender

Gender Identity

Gender Dysphoria

Gender Expression

Transgender

Cisgender

Sexual Orientation

Non-Binary / Gender Nonconforming / Gender Queer

Intersex

Transvestite

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Defining the Contours of the Cultural Battle

On one side...

"Refrain from contrasting trans men and women with 'real' or 'biological' men and women. Contrasting transgender people with 'real' or 'biological' men and women is a false comparison. They are real men and women, and doing so contributes to the inaccurate perception that transgender people are being deceptive when, in fact, they are being authentic and courageous."

Human Rights Campaign website

"From a medical perspective, the appropriate determinant of sex is gender identity. It is counter to medical science to use chromosomes, hormones, internal reproductive organs, external genitalia, or secondary sex characteristics to override gender identity for purposes of classifying someone as male or female."

*Dr. Deanna Adkins, Duke University School of Medicine and
Director of Duke Center for Child and Adolescent Gender Care*

"[Young transgender people] are our best teachers in alerting us to the reality that gender exists primarily between our ears—in our brains and our minds—and not necessarily by what is between our legs, our genitalia, or in our accompanying XX or XY chromosomes, as many are mistakenly prone to believe. The refuse to pin themselves down as either male or female—maybe they are a boy/girl, or a gender hybrid, or gender ambidextrous, moving freely between the genders, living somewhere in-between, or creating their own mosaic of gender identity and expression. As they grow older, they might identify themselves as agender, or gender neutral, or gender queer. Each one of these children is exercising their gender creativity, and we can think of them as our gender-creative children."

*Diane Ehrensaft, Director of Mental Health at
the Child and Adolescent Gender Center at Benioff Children's Hospital, UCSF*

On the other side...

"And so I distinguish between personal, direct exercises of authority that involve manhood and womanhood, and indirect, impersonal exercises of authority which don't concern gender. She is woman. I am man. And I am being directly pressed on by this woman in an authoritative way. Should she be doing that? Should I be experiencing that? And my answer is, no. I think that is contrary to the way God made us.

Here would be an example of what I mean by those two words – personal and direct. A drill sergeant that gets in the face and says, "Hut, one, hut, two, keep your mouth shut, private! Get your rifle up here! Turn around like I said!" I don't think a woman ought to be doing that to a man because it is direct, it is forceful, it is authoritative, it is compromising something about the way a man and a woman were designed by God to relate.

The opposite of personal and direct would be if she is a city planner, for example. She is sitting in an office at a desk drawing which street should be one way and which should be two way and, thus, she is going to control which way men drive all day long. That is a lot of authority and it is totally impersonal and indirect, and therefore it has no dimension of maleness or femaleness about it. And for that reason, I don't think it contradicts anything [biblically]."

John Piper, Ask Pastor John: Do You Use Biblical Commentaries Written by Women

"As I consider Disney's new depiction of femininity in Captain Marvel, I cannot help but mourn. How far we've come since the days when we sought to protect and cherish our women. The great drumroll of the previous Avenger movies led to this: a woman protecting men and saving the world. The mightiest of all the Avengers – indeed, after whom they are named – is the armed princess turned feminist queen, who comes down from the tower to do what Prince Charming could not. Am I nitpicking? *It is a movie after all.* I wish it were. Instead of engaging the movie's ideology as mere fiction, a fun escape to another world, we have allowed it to bear deadly fruit on earth. Along with Disney, we abandon the traditional princess vibe, and seek to empower little girls everywhere to be strong like men. Cinderella trades her glass slipper for combat boots; Belle, her books for a bazooka. Does the insanity bother us anymore?"

Greg Morse, written for desiringGod.org

"As a woman leader in the conservative Evangelical world, I learned early to show constant pronounced deference – not just proper respect which I was glad to show – to male leaders and, when placed in situations to serve alongside them, to do so apologetically. I issued disclaimers ad nauseam. I wore flats instead of heels when I knew I'd be serving alongside a man of shorter stature so I wouldn't be taller than he. I've ridden elevators in hotels packed with fellow leaders who were serving at the same event and not been spoken to and, even more awkwardly, in the same vehicles where I was never acknowledged. I've been in team meetings where I was either ignored or made fun of, the latter of which I was expected to understand was all in good fun. I am a laughter. I can take jokes and make jokes. I know good fun when I'm having it and I also know when I'm being dismissed and ridiculed. I was the elephant in the room with a skirt on. I've been talked down to by male seminary students and held my tongue when I wanted to say, "Brother, I was getting up before dawn to pray and to pore over the Scriptures when you were still in your pull ups." About a year ago I had an opportunity to meet a theologian I'd long respected. I'd read virtually every book he'd written. I'd looked so forward to getting to share a meal with him and talk theology. The instant I met him, he looked me up and down, smiled approvingly and said, "You are better looking than _____." He didn't leave it blank. He filled it in with the name of another woman Bible teacher."

Beth Moore, written for Living Proof, "A Letter to My Brothers"

The problem with stereotypes...

"Unfortunately, many of our beliefs about masculinity and femininity come from culture rather than the Bible, even though we sometimes rubber stamp these cultural norms with the label 'biblical.' If something is truly 'biblical,' it needs to actually come from the Bible."

Preston Sprinkle, Embodied

"Biblically speaking, masculinity is what long-term sanctification produces in Christian men and femininity what long-term sanctification produces in women."

Sam Alberry, What God Has to Say About Our Bodies

The role of gender: _____ the goodness and glory of God, not simply to define differences.

"Right at the beginning of the book of Genesis, we have those two complementary accounts of creation. We have this rich symbolic account of God's good creation in which, at its very heart, the coming together of male plus female is itself a signpost pointing to that great complementarity of God's whole creation, of heaven and earth belonging together. That is why, I believe, the biblical picture of man and woman together in marriage is not something about which we can say, 'Oh well, they had some funny ideas back then. We know better now.' Every time I, as a priest, celebrate the marriage of a couple, I remind myself, and I frequently remind the couple, that what we are doing is setting up a signpost. We live in a world of many storms and many winds; those signposts can easily get battered and broken. But they are pointing somewhere – and the reality to which they are pointing is the fulfillment of God's good purposes for creation."

N.T. Wright, "What is Marriage For?" written for Plough Quarterly

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