

Gen 1:26-31; 2:4-25 God made Mankind

## God made: man and woman

Throughout Genesis 1 there's been a rising crescendo of increasing complexity, growing dignity and purpose, culminating with the creation of people in **Gen 1:26-31**, where what God saw was "very good". Two things make people different from the rest of creation; how they're created and what they're instructed.

### Image of God. v27 "In the image of God he created them"

Image = likeness, resemblance. Nothing else was created in God's image. Image of God = Means a sense of morality, justice, rationality, spirituality and aesthetic (appreciation of beauty)

John Piper says if an image is created to display / communicate / reflect something, then someone creating 7 Billion images of themselves wants to be noticed. God wants to be known – through you and me. Even though mankind has turned from God – that image is still there. He refers to us as mirrors set 45 deg, reflecting God's likeness. Sinful nature prefers our own image to God so we face the mirror to ourselves, then just casting a shadow of God rather than a reflection. The image is still there but less clearly.

Becoming a Christian turns that mirror back to God so when we walk in step with God's Holy Spirit, we reflect and demonstrate God into this world again.

### "...male and female"

Man and woman are equally made in the image of God. By revealing himself as "Father" and "Son" (and spirit) we may think of God as male. God is a mystery but by revealing himself as Father and Son for example, helps us understand something of how God relates to himself, and to us. But all the traits we understand to be male and female are all fully present in God, they could have come from nowhere else. So God is approachable, knowable, relatable equally by men and women.

The bible is telling us that God created male and God created female. Not all men are the same, not all women are the same. But gender is part of God's created order for our good. Ultimately our Identity is being in Jesus.

### Second Telling - read Gen 2:4-25

This is a second telling of the creation story – different style.

Gen 2:18 *"The Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a **helper** suitable for him.'*" "Helper" has a sense of complementing, bringing something different and not simply a companion. It certainly doesn't imply lesser partner as God is referred to as "helper" in Ex 18:4 *"My father's God was my **helper**".* Same Hebrew word.

So Male and female are different. Equal in value, different in role. See also Eph 5:21-33 describing mutual submission within marriage with a different instruction about the shape of that.

Matthew Henry puts it well *"That the woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam; not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved."*

**What about those who aren't married yet or won't be married yet?** The pattern of male and female is a blessing to the whole community, not just the individual marriage. You're no more female because you're married. No less male if you're single for example.

### Summary

All through creation God has been separating and differentiating. Light from dark, land from sea, creatures "according to their kind", eat this not this this is right and this is wrong. Boundaries to help us.

Let's enjoy exploring the good God has given us within the boundaries, rather than pushing to see what happens when we exceed God's limits.

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Explore the variety of femininity we see in the Bible. The courage of Esther approaching the king to save her people, the strength of Deborah killing Sisera with a tent peg, the devotion of Mary Magdalene etc.

Explore the breadth of masculinity we see in the Bible. The rawness of Samson – deeply morally flawed ending his life serving God sacrificially, Bezalel the artist, Elijah the public figure - struggling with depression to the point of attempting suicide etc.

The Bible paints a rich and varied picture of both men and women

### Conclusion

We have been made in the image of God to display what he's like, to increase in number and "Rule" over creation (Gen 1:28). RULE is a surprisingly strong word! To RULE without reflecting God's image is dangerous indeed. But we're called to extend the rule of Jesus through the world by the good news of Jesus as Matt 28:18- 20 restates the mandate of Gen 1:28 in light of the gospel

*Matt 28 18-20 Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup>Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'*

Let's be men and women, comfortable in our identity which finds fullness in Jesus, confident in our authority that also finds fullness in Jesus and committed to our calling – making Jesus known!