

**Forward: Claiming the Life God Gave You**  
**What Is A Woman?**  
**Joshua 15:13-19; 17:3-6**

**VETERANS DAY!!!**

**Introduction:** Ontology is the study of the nature of being. In the context of humanity, ontology is the study of what it means to be man or woman, and as such, it seeks to define at a fundamental core level what it means for a man to be a man, and for a woman to be a woman. For most of human history the results of this effort have tended to leave women in a second-class status as humans; as a second-class being.

One example of this second-class status has been highlighted by The Museum of the American Revolution in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. On their website, they have an interesting article on the journey of women's rights in the United States. It focuses specifically on the evolution and history of women's right to vote but it also highlights the reality of a world that viewed women as second-class beings. For instance,

“1765 - Sir William Blackstone publishes Commentaries on the Laws of England, reinforcing the tradition of “coverture” — that once married, a woman's property belongs to her husband and she has no legal rights. “Coverture” was brought over by the British colonists who followed the traditions of English Common Law.”<sup>1</sup>

Abigail Adams, famously wrote to her husband John Adams who was one of the founding fathers of our nation and president after George Washington,

“ ‘...in the new Code of Laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make I desire you would Remember the Ladies, and be more generous and favourable to them than your ancestors.’ Abigail Adams, March 31, 1776”<sup>2</sup>

However, the main purpose of the article is to draw attention to how the culturally prevalent second-class ontology of women effected their right to vote.

“April 20, 1777 - The New York State Constitution defines voters as “male inhabitants.””<sup>3</sup>

“November 16, 1807 - A contested local election in Essex County over the location of a courthouse causes further disputes over voter fraud. As a result,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.amrevmuseum.org/virtualexhibits/when-women-lost-the-vote-a-revolutionary-story/timeline>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.amrevmuseum.org/virtualexhibits/when-women-lost-the-vote-a-revolutionary-story/timeline>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.amrevmuseum.org/virtualexhibits/when-women-lost-the-vote-a-revolutionary-story/timeline>

the New Jersey State Legislature amends the State Constitution to define voters as free, white male tax-paying citizens.”<sup>4</sup>

To those who don't pay much attention to history, it wasn't until August of 1920 that the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment was ratified to give women the right to vote. Granted, in some states that right was only protected for white women because up until very recent history in western society, many white people assumed their ontology was superior to that of non-whites, and as such, in places like the south, states created laws to undermine the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment to try and keep nonwhites, and especially blacks, from being able to vote. Thankfully, those laws were struck down by the Voting Rights Act of 1965, but interestingly it still took fifty years for Florida, South Carolina, Georgia, Louisiana and North Carolina to officially acknowledge the constitutional right of women to vote, and over sixty years for Mississippi! It wasn't until 1984 that all fifty states officially endorsed the legality of a woman to vote in the United States!

It is literally within my lifetime that all 50 states were willing to publicly declare that they believed one of the most defining values of our nation applied to women; that the truth our founding fathers so boldly proclaimed to the world when we declared our independence as a nation (“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness”<sup>5</sup>), not only applied to white men, but also every other race of humanity and women!

So why have women been historically viewed as “lesser” beings, and how has that view been maintained throughout most of human history? There's a lot of reasons we could talk about, but in Christian society the Bible has been used to defend this ideology, mostly because people confuse the role of women in a Biblical marriage covenant as the identity or ontology of a woman. Now, before I go any further into that thought, let me show you why our study of the Book of Joshua stirred me to address this subject.

In Joshua 13:8-21:45 we find a detailed description of how Joshua divided up the land of Canaan between the tribes of Israel. In the middle of that description, we find two stories that completely undermine the idea that the Bible defines a woman as a human being with less rights, privileges, and freedoms; that a woman is somehow by her ontology created as a subservient being to man.

**Proposition: The Book of Joshua has two very clear examples of stories that confront the idea that women were created by God as lesser beings who are supposed to serve men and be owned by them.**

**The first story is in Joshua 15.**

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.amrevmuseum.org/virtualexhibits/when-women-lost-the-vote-a-revolutionary-story/timeline>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript>

**(1) In Joshua 15:15-19 Caleb gives a sizable portion of land to his daughter Achsah and nothing in the text indicates there was anything wrong with his decision.**

- A. 15 And he went up from there against the inhabitants of Debir. Now the name of Debir formerly was Kiriath-sepher. 16 And Caleb said, "Whoever strikes Kiriath-sepher and captures it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter as wife." 17 And Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, captured it. And he gave him Achsah his daughter as wife. 18 When she came to him, she urged him to ask her father for a field. And she got off her donkey, and Caleb said to her, "What do you want?" 19 She said to him, "Give me a blessing. Since you have given me the land of the Negeb, give me also springs of water." And he gave her the upper springs and the lower springs. (15:15-19)**
- B.** For those caught off guard by Caleb giving his daughter in marriage, it was also normal for people to give their sons in marriage as well. Many marriages were arranged in history.
- C.** Interestingly some conservative Biblical scholars truly struggle with this passage. J.D. Currid suggests that Achsah is asking for the land as a part of a dowry to be given to her husband, and as such, Caleb isn't actually giving her the land as a possession, but to Othniel.<sup>6</sup> However, the text clearly says in verse 18 that she tried to get Othniel to ask Caleb for a field and he wouldn't do it, therefore, Achsah did it, and when she did, she didn't ask it to be put in Othniel's name, but her name.
- D.** Calvin seems to believe Achsah was indeed asking for herself as well because he condemns her actions and even criticizes her and Caleb both, including accusing her of essentially stealing part of her brothers' rightful inheritance.<sup>7</sup> The point is, Calvin's strong condemnation makes it clear he didn't believe Achsah was asking for something to be given to her husband, but for herself. Furthermore, the text makes it clear that Caleb gave it to her and not Othniel.
- E.** Finally, nothing in the text suggests anything wrong was done in this action. It is not presented as a sinful action or critique of Caleb, but simply as what happened. To read anything into it otherwise is to read something into Scripture that the Scriptures themselves didn't feel necessary to declare to us.

**The second story in Joshua that confronts the idea that women were created by God as lesser beings who are supposed to serve men and be owned by them is in Joshua 17.**

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<sup>6</sup> Currid, J. D. (2011). *Strong and Courageous: Joshua Simply Explained* (pp. 183–184). Darlington, England; Carlisle, PA: EP Books.

<sup>7</sup> Calvin, J., & Beveridge, H. (2010). *Commentary on the Book of Joshua* (pp. 206–209). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

(2) In Joshua 17:3-6 we are reminded that although there were specific requirements, Moses nonetheless received instructions from God that allowed women to inherit land.

- A. 3 Now Zelophehad the son of Hopher, son of Gilead, son of Machir, son of Manasseh, had no sons, but only daughters, and these are the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. 4 They approached Eleazar the priest and Joshua the son of Nun and the leaders and said, "The LORD commanded Moses to give us an inheritance along with our brothers." So according to the mouth of the LORD he gave them an inheritance among the brothers of their father. 5 Thus there fell to Manasseh ten portions, besides the land of Gilead and Bashan, which is on the other side of the Jordan. 6 because the daughters of Manasseh received an inheritance along with his sons. The land of Gilead was allotted to the rest of the people of Manasseh. (Joshua 17:3-6)
- B. What were these five women talking about? To understand what's going on we need to jump back in time and examine the issue that was brought to Moses concerning their understanding of the Law and the rights of women.
- C. 3 "Our father died in the wilderness. He was not among the company of those who gathered themselves together against the LORD in the company of Korah, but died for his own sin. And he had no sons. 4 Why should the name of our father be taken away from his clan because he had no son? Give to us a possession among our father's brothers." 5 Moses brought their case before the LORD. 6 And the LORD said to Moses, 7 "The daughters of Zelophehad are right. You shall give them possession of an inheritance among their father's brothers and transfer the inheritance of their father to them. 8 And you shall speak to the people of Israel, saying, 'If a man dies and has no son, then you shall transfer his inheritance to his daughter. (Numbers 27:3-8)
- D. Prior to Numbers 27 the land would have gone to a brother of the deceased or some other man in the family, however, God made it clear to Moses that the daughters of the deceased man were not to be passed over. Later in the book of Numbers the right of women to own property was underscored by Moses in the laws guaranteeing land would stay within the tribe that originally inherited it. Moses proclaimed,
- E. "8 And every daughter who possesses an inheritance in any tribe of the people of Israel shall be wife to one of the clan of the tribe of her father, so that every one of the people of Israel may possess the inheritance of his fathers. 9 So no inheritance shall be transferred from one tribe to another, for each of the tribes of the people of Israel shall hold on to its own inheritance." (Numbers 36:8-10)

- F. It was not uncommon at all for a woman to marry outside of their clan or tribe, however, if they owned land in their tribal inheritance, her children would be considered members of the clan and tribe of her husband, and thus when they inherited the land from their parents, that land would then belong to a different clan or tribe. Therefore, the law stated if a woman inherited the land of her father (or mother), then she had to marry a man within her own clan so that the land would remain in the clan it was originally given. However, the point we need to consider in our conversation is that it's clearly completely incorrect to say the law didn't allow women to inherit and own property.

So, where am I going with this? Nothing in our society has been more chaotically tossed around than the ontology of a woman, that is, the inherent truth of what it means to actually be a woman, and the value of her being, in comparison to a man. From the women's liberation movement that had all sorts of opposing platitudes; to the anti-women's liberation movement that found a home in all kinds of different legalistic religions including the legalistic versions of Christianity; to the debates within conservative Christianity that insist on defining gender exclusively through the lens of the complementarian teachings of Scripture for marriage; to the current, truly bizarre attempts by the transgender movement to eliminate gender from human ontology all while simultaneously creating a maze of dogmatic gender terminology; the landscape of the conversation has been dizzying.

So, for the remainder of our time today I want to walk you through a Biblical answer to the question, "What is a woman?"

To women, I hope this is an encouragement and challenge towards the uniqueness and the reflective glory that God made you to be of Him.

To the young girls, I hope this sets a clear Biblical picture for you as you become a woman, a picture not painted by the hands of political and religious interests, but rather by the Creator of the Universe who willed you into existence.

For men and boys, listen closely to what you should be encouraging, applauding, nurturing, and guarding in the women and girls God has placed in your life.

Single men and boys, listen for what you should be looking for if you want to marry a woman who is reflecting the glory of God through the femininity that He created in His image!

So, let's begin where the Bible begins. The Book of Genesis. I want to walk you through the two most talked about passages when it comes to gender and make sure you are understanding them in context, then I'm going to make sure you understand the Biblical truths that takes us to the answer of the question, "What is a woman?"

First up is Genesis 1.

**26 Then God [(Elohim)] said, "Let us make man [(plural noun that means both men and women)] in our image, after our likeness. And let them [(both men and women)] have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 So God created man [(humanity)] in his own image, in the image of God he created him [(humanity)]; male and female he created them. 28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." ... 31 And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. (Genesis 1:26-28, 31)**

The purpose of Genesis one is for the reader to understand there is one God and He alone is the creator and sustainer of the Universe. To the Hebrews that Moses wrote this, it clarified to them that neither the pharaoh of Egypt, nor any of the other gods of Egypt, Canaan or anywhere else, are gods at all. There is One Almighty and All-Powerful God who created all things, and as such is over all things. Thus, in Genesis chapter one, Moses only referred to God as Elohim. In that context we read of the creation of humanity and find out that the ontology, that is, the existence of humanity, has two distinct characteristics—(1) Imago Dei/image of God and (2) given dominion over the earth. We are going to come back to all of this in just a minute because Genesis 1 is the primary source for understanding who a man and a woman are as created beings.

So, what do we learn about a man and women in Genesis chapter 2? Well let's look at some of it first.

**18 Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." 19 Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. 20 The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. 21 So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. 22 And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. 23 Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." 24 Therefore [(Can also be translated "For that reason")]** a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. (Genesis 2:18-24)

I'm going to hash this out more in a minute, but this is not a mandate for all to be married.

Also, it can't be missed that when Moses begins retelling the creation story of man, he does so not only by zooming his focus in on the first man and first woman, but also by letting us know something else about Elohim, the creator and ruler of everything. Elohim has a

name, and His name is Yahweh. The ontology of God is not just that He is the all-powerful creator and sustainer of the universe, but that He is also by His very being, knowable! The pagan god's were not knowable, but the true God; the God who would later make a Covenant with Abraham to form a nation through him, and through that nation send Jesus; this God can be known by us as we abide in Him and cling to Him. God made us to know Him and be known by Him! This is the God Moses wanted the Hebrews to understand as the God who had called them, was leading them, and promised to protect and prosper them.

However, the key to understanding what is being said about a man and a woman in this chapter is told to us in Genesis 2:24. This verse is often left out of the conversation of Genesis 2, but its fundamental to a proper interpretation of the passage because it clearly gives us the purpose for the retelling of the creation story of mankind—marriage! The purpose is not to tell us about the ontology of mankind, but rather the ontology of marriage. The word “therefore” in verse 24 can also be translated as “so that,” or “for that reason,” and thus putting that into context with what we just read in Genesis chapter two means God made Eve, and consequently all the women after her, so that a man can and should leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife. This however does NOT override what we read in chapter one.

The purpose of chapter two is not the ontology of humanity but the ontology of marriage, and the complimentary roles men and women are made to assume in marriage. However, to extrapolate what we see in Genesis 2 as the entire identity of a man and a woman takes us away from the most clearly pronounced and ultimate identity of a man and a woman in Genesis 1. I'm not implying that we learn nothing about masculinity and femininity in Genesis 2, but rather that what we learn in Genesis 2 is meant to add to what we learn in Genesis 1, not define it. Genesis 1 defines Genesis 2. Genesis 1 is premier, and Genesis 2 is complimentary. Genesis 1 is the substance and Genesis 2 is a specific application.

Now that I've thoroughly confused you. Let me read one more passage to you that captures the essence of Biblical femininity then I'm going to quickly give you a run-down of what I believe takes us to the Biblical answer for the question, “What is a woman?”

**10 An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels. 11 The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain. 12 She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life. 13 She seeks wool and flax, and works with willing hands. 14 She is like the ships of the merchant; she brings her food from afar. 15 She rises while it is yet night and provides food for her household and portions for her maidens. 16 She considers a field and buys it; with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard. 17 She dresses herself with strength and makes her arms strong. 18 She perceives that her merchandise is profitable. Her lamp does not go out at night. 19 She puts her hands to the distaff, and her hands hold the spindle. 20 She opens her hand to the poor and reaches out her hands to the needy. 21 She is not afraid of snow for her household, for all her household are clothed in scarlet. 22 She makes bed coverings for herself; her clothing is fine linen and purple. 23 Her husband is known in the gates when he sits among the elders of the land. 24 She**

makes linen garments and sells them; she delivers sashes to the merchant.  
25 Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come. 26 She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. 27 She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.  
28 Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her:  
29 "Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all." 30 Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised. 31 Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates. (Proverbs 31:10-31)

That my friends is NOT the description of doormat who is an emotionally weak, easily frightened, unintelligent, codependent mess of hair and makeup waiting around to be affirmed on TikTok and Instagram; but a Spirit filled, God ordained, God called, God created woman!

So let me put this all together for you in something concise. If we are going to properly answer the question, "What is a Woman?" then we need to make sure we understand the Biblical truth that forms the answer.

**Proposition: The following are 3 fundamental truths seen in Genesis 1 and 2, as well as other passages in the Bible, that formulate the Biblical answer to the question "what is a woman?"**

**The first fundamental truth is that ...**

**(1) Both men and women are equally created in the image of God ("Imago Dei"). Therefore, every character trait of God is meant to be fully seen in every individual human being.**

**A. The following are 5 examples of the image of God and as such they should all be fully seen in every individual whether male or female:**

**The 1<sup>st</sup> example of the image of God that should be fully seen in every individual is ...**

**1. Leadership.**

- a. God is by nature a leader. - **"19 The Lord has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all." (Psalm 103:19)**
- b. Mankind will never lead God, but Genesis 1 expressly says both men and women were made to have dominion and to lead!
- c. **26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them [(both men and women)] have dominion ...**  
**... 28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and**



**multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion ..."**  
**(Genesis 1:26 & 28)**

- d. God made us in His image so that we can and will lead. We often speak of leadership as if it's something men are to have more than women. It is true that in the Bible men have designated leadership roles in the marriage and the local church, but that in no way insinuates a woman is to be any less of a leader, or a man any more of a leader. Leadership is not an exclusive male quality, nor a superior male quality, it's an Imago Dei quality that should be fully present in both men and women.
- e. For instance, in Proverbs 31 we saw leadership big time! It's arguably the most prominent way the femininity of the Proverbs 31 woman shined!

**The 2<sup>nd</sup> example of the image of God that should be fully seen in every individual is ...**

## **2. Self-sufficiency.**

- a. **24 The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, 25 nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. (Acts 17:24-25)**
- b. I know we talked about this last week, but I had to bring it up again. Throughout human history women have been portrayed as not being self-sufficient and in need of a man. But it gets left out that the dependent state of women in most societies is a direct result of the rules that force women to be dependent on a man! If you refuse to let a woman have an education, money, and property then she's obviously dependent on a man.
- c. The idea that a woman isn't self-sufficient defies basic logic! Look at how many people in the world were raised by a single mom! It's not the optimal way to be raised, but single mothers make it all happen every day. It's likely a hermeneutical overstep to base any truth on this, but it can't be missed that God never told Eve she needed a helper, He told Adam that Adam needed one!
- d. So, it's not masculine to be able to stand on your own two feet, its human, and its human because humans are made in the image of God! It is not feminine to need a man's intellect or wisdom, it is feminine to need and seek God for His intellect and wisdom. Go back and read how self-sufficient and independent the Proverbs 31 woman is! She didn't

need her husband to thrive. She didn't have to ask her husband what field to buy or if it made sense to buy it! I'm not saying we shouldn't consult with one another and learn from one another, that's actually basic wisdom, but what I am saying is that it's not feminine to have less intellect, wisdom, etc. and masculine to have more, so that a man is more self-sufficient than a woman. In Proverbs 31, her femininity shined with her husband and on her husband, but it wasn't defined by her husband!

### The 3<sup>rd</sup> example of the image of God that should be fully seen in every individual is ...

#### 3. Strength.

- a. **"5 Great is our Lord, and abundant in power;" (Psalm 147:5a)**
- b. The dominate strength of the male physiology over female physiology is certainly clear to all who have basic common sense, but physical strength is only one manifestation of the characteristic of strength and power. If you didn't see the incredible strength in the Proverbs 31 woman then you didn't read the passage!
- c. My point again is that strength is not an exclusive male characteristic. Human beings were made to reflect the strength and power of the God who made us! Strength and power are not just muscle capacity. It entails emotional steadfastness, mental strength, spiritual strength, etc. Although God is certainly ALL powerful, Godly strength in humanity is much more about character than it is physique, which is why God told Joshua,
- d. **6 Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. 7 Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. (Joshua 1:6-7)**
- e. The context of strength wasn't how well Joshua could physically swing a sword in his old age, but the strength of character to do what God said to do and lead the people to follow God no matter how difficult the circumstances became.

### The 4<sup>th</sup> example of the image of God that should be fully seen in every individual is ...

#### 4. Helper/Servant.

- a. In Genesis 2 God tells Adam He's going to give him a helper and that helper is Eve. But God also calls Himself Helper.
- b. C. A. Myers wrote, **"In the Old Testament a helper is one who provides aid or relief, most notably the Lord."**<sup>8</sup>
- c. **"1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." (Psalm 46:1)**
- d. **"4 Behold, God is my helper; the Lord is the upholder of my life." (Psalm 54:4)**
- e. Therefore, because God is a helper who serves us, most preeminently in Christ, neither male nor female can lessen the significance of this characteristic being a part of their ontology; that is what we are both created to fully reflect.
- f. Eve certainly was made to be able to serve and complement Adam in their marriage, but Adam was also made to serve and complement Eve. It is an Imago Dei characteristic, not a male or female characteristic.
- g. The Bible tells us to serve and help one another in the church. Jesus clearly taught that if you want to be a Godly leader, then make your leadership about how you bless those around you and not about how you can get them to bless you (servant leadership).
- h. The point is, being a servant or a helper is in no way an exclusive feminine characteristic, it's a characteristic of God and thus a characteristic that should be fully displayed by all who are in Him!

**The 5<sup>th</sup> example of the image of God that should be fully seen in every individual is ...**

##### 5. Beauty.

- a. Because we think of beauty as an outward physical trait more than a character trait, we often think of beauty as a feminine characteristic. In almost every society throughout human history, physical expressions of beauty are far more prominent among women than they are men. Ironically in the bird world it seems to be the exact opposite. Male birds typically have far more outward beauty than female birds. However, birds or no birds, beauty is not a feminine characteristic, it's a godly characteristic. The Psalmist wrote,

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<sup>8</sup> Myers, A. C. (1987). In [The Eerdmans Bible dictionary](#) (p. 480). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

- b. **4 One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple. (Psalm 27:4)**
  - c. The beauty of God is certainly seen in the outward appearance of His creation, but it's also seen in the providence of God and how He carries out His will (Romans 8:28). The point being, beauty is not just a visual thing, it's a character thing. Its why the Lord said this to Samuel as he went to look for the man who would replace Saul as King,
  - d. **7 But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7)**
    - a. Biblical beauty goes to all that you are as a person. It's not hair and makeup, muscles, or facial features that make you beautiful, but the image of GOD that shines forth as we know and follow Jesus! Godly beauty is something far more spectacular than anything that can be captured in a photo. Godly beauty is seen in the fruit of His life bursting forth from us, because HE is beautiful! Beauty is not a feminine characteristic; it is a godly characteristic and thus one that should be fully seen in men and women.
- B.** So those are five examples of the image of God that should be fully seen in every man and woman! My list was originally way longer than five but I cut it down to show you just enough to see the obvious repetition of the truth that our identity is not about being male and female, but rather about being the image of God. As you will see in a second, this doesn't remove male and female from our identity, but it does define what it is we are called to express. We are not designed to express gender, we are designed to express the image of God through our gender. Men and women are equally and fully made in the image of God and thus, that is the prominent characteristic of our identity that should consume us. I'm going to dig into that more in a minute, but let me take you to the second fundamental truth in the Bible that formulates the Biblical answer to the question "what is a woman?"

**The second fundamental truth seen in Genesis 1 and 2, as well as other passages in the Bible, that formulates the Biblical answer to the question "what is a woman?" is that ...**

- (2) The Bible NEVER separates our genetic gender from our identity. You were created to be a man or a woman forever.**

- A. Genesis 1 says He made mankind as male and female, not in some mutable, transferable way, but rather in the inseparable ontology of what it means to be human. Your genetically conceived gender is as much as who you are, as your soul is who you are. You are not a soul with a body, but you are equally body and soul. Its why Jesus said,
- B. **28 And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. (Matthew 10:28)**
- C. Because of sin we will experience a separation of body and soul at death, but surprisingly to some, the Bible promises ALL will be resurrected. That's right, every person who dies and fully experiences the curse of sin in the full separation of body and soul will be resurrected and restored as a whole person. However, there are two totally different eternal realities for that resurrected united man or woman. Jesus said,
- D. **28 Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice 29 and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment. (John 5:28-29)**
- E. Thus, the warning of Jesus that Matthew recorded. You need to fear Him who can condemn both body and soul to hell. That's not Satan, that's God! The point in our conversation is then what was clearly stated in Genesis 1:27. God made humanity as males and females. He didn't make humanity that way after the fall as some way of confusing people, He made humanity that way by design. If you are created in conception as a woman, it's as much of your identity and person as your soul!
- F. The Eternal Son of God was not a man, but when He became human, he became a man (John 1:14, Philippians 2:5-10) so that He could pay the penalty owed by mankind. When Jesus rose from the grave, He didn't rise from the grave a gender-neutral eternal being, but rather He rose from the grave as a man and is coming back as a man! (Acts 1:10-11). Likewise, when we rise from the grave we will rise not as an alternate version of us, but as who we were made to be, which includes being physically male or female.
- G. Some attempt to challenge this truth by pointing to Galatians 3:28 – “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” However, Paul is saying nothing of the ontology of mankind, but is rather pointing to what gives us status in the Kingdom. Our status as God's children has nothing to do with our ethnicity, socio-economic status, or gender, but rather our adoption as God's children through the grace of Christ!

- H. So, if you want to understand what it means to be a man or a woman, you have to understand that being a genetic man or a genetic woman created in conception by God will never not be who you are. Once again, what I just said here is going to come together in just a minute to answer our question—“What is a woman?”

**The third fundamental truth seen in Genesis 1 and 2, as well as other passages in the Bible, that formulates the Biblical answer to the question “what is a woman?” is that ...**

**(3) Our gender uniquely expresses itself in marriage, but it is not completed or defined by its role in marriage. Because gender is an inseparable part of our identity, it then can only find its completion in the Creator we were meant to glorify!**

- A. Let me be clear, gender is doubtlessly perfectly created with an intentional application and function of marriage. We cannot be fruitful and multiply without the complement of gender. Teams are most successful when they are comprised of people with different gifts who work in harmony for a common goal. The design of gender creates a physiological and psychological diversity in a family for it to be a wholistic body, a team that can experience a higher level of success than one that lacks the intended diversity.
- B. However, despite the very clear application of gender to the design of the family, I was not created to be made whole, or fulfilled by another person. I was created to be made whole by the creator! Our ontology is fulfilled and completed by no one other than Jesus!
- C. **9 For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, 10 and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. (Colossians 2:9-10)**
- D. Therefore, our marital roles are NOT our gender identity. A woman is no more a woman by being married than a man is a man by being married. You don't have to be married to be fully masculine or feminine. Jesus never got married and He is the ultimate man!
- E. If I have to be married to a woman to truly be a man, then for all eternity I'll be incomplete as a man because Jesus said we are not going to be married in heaven. (Matthew 22:29-30)
- F. If I have to be married to be complete, then Paul gave some terribly bad advice in his letter to the church in Corinth where he encouraged people to stay single if they were able. (1 Corinthians 7:6-9). This is the same letter that he told all to act like men (1 Corinthians 16:13-14). If acting like a man means to be married, then Paul just confused a bunch of people!

- G. The bottom line is that God made you male or female, and thus God is the one who completes your masculinity and femininity. And, when two people enter a marriage that are being completed in Christ rather than one another, then you have a marriage and family dynamic unlike anything else on the planet!

**So, what's the Biblical answer to the question, "What is a woman?"**

**Conclusion: Biblically a woman is an adult genetic female, as such, Biblical femininity is the distinct expression of the image of God through His unique design of the physiology and psychology of a genetic female.**

In the same way, a man is an adult genetic male and therefore Biblical masculinity is the distinct expression of the image of God through His unique design of the physiology and psychology of a genetic male. We are not here today to talk about masculinity, so I just wanted to make sure the definition is understood in both contexts.

So let me explain what I just said in the context of femininity. Although a woman is fully a woman if she never marries or has children, a woman is nonetheless still a physical being genetically created with significantly different life-giving abilities. Even if a woman is incapable of conceiving or giving birth, it still doesn't take away from the fact that being created as a female is to be created with a physiological and psychological structure to conceive, bear, birth, and nurture children. This genetic structure and design is the framework of every genetic female regardless of the effects of the curse of sin that leaves some women with no opportunity to conceive. However, just because the curse of sin has taken a toll on the ability of the human body to function as it was originally created, doesn't change the fact the design of a woman is still uniquely structured to create and nurture life. Femininity is then the distinct expression of the common Imago Dei that all of humanity is supposed to reflect, but through the unique physiological and psychological structure of a genetic woman it takes on a unique expression.

Let me illustrate it to you this way. If I had two people play the same exact song the exact same way on two different horned instruments you would hear the same notes, but with an entirely different sound. A French horns expression of that note, although exactly the same note, will sound distinctly different from a trumpet! This is exactly how gender works. The feminine expression of the image of God is the exact same image a man is seeking to express, but because she's a French horn and he's a trumpet, the way it sounds will be different. Femininity looks different from masculinity not because the two aren't supposed to express the same characteristics of God, but because the design of the ones making those expressions are distinctly different. As one uniquely built to nurture life, a female's expression of the nurturing characteristic of God, whether it be in the family or in relationships in general, is going to look different than a man's expression, if for no other reason a woman is a French horn and a man is a trumpet.

There are many points in this sermon that we could have done an entire sermon on all by themselves, and this is certainly one of them. It's an interesting train of thought to stop and think about how the Imago Dei uniquely expresses itself through our gender, but the

danger of those conversations is that it starts to sound like the effort of a woman needs to be to get the French horn to sound like a French Horn and for men to get the trumpet to sound like a trumpet! Conversations then ensue about the correct sound of a French horn and the correct sound of a trumpet. Some would hear a French Horn playing a bad note and say it doesn't sound like a French horn at all! But if it's a French Horn then it sounds exactly like a French horn, it's all it can ever sound like, because that's what it is! The conversation of whether a French horn sounds like a French horn is ridiculous. There's no other sound a French horn can make! However, if the conversation is about how poorly the person playing the French horn is playing it, well that's a different conversation! What am I talking about? Well, let me take you to the challenge.

**Challenge: Are you trying to assert and express your gender, or shine forth the IMAGO DEI (Image of God)—the identity you were created to reflect! God is working in us so we can experience the fullness of His image as our identity.**

The challenge of the Bible is not to express gender, but to display the Imago Dei (The Image of God)! Our effort should therefore NEVER be to demonstrate our masculinity or femininity. Rather as those who are created masculine and feminine, our entire effort is to display the character traits of God. As we do, the expression of HIS traits will display the distinctness of who God created us to be, which is never separable from our gender. But understand God's will is not to shine forth your gender, it's to shine forth His image!

All of us get tempted to prove ourselves to others, and ironically to ourselves. For men and women, we will do things to try and tell ourselves we are truly being a man or a woman. In the transgender world it's flat out weird. They are trying so hard to get people to acknowledge a gender they are not, that they end up looking like people trying hard to be something they are not! It's an extreme example of what we end up doing when our focus is on how to truly be a man or a woman. The conversations we get into are equally confusing. The reason is, it's the wrong effort and the wrong questions!

We were not designed to shine forth our gender, we were designed to shine forth the image of God! Focusing on perfecting your gender expressions is a misguided path from the beginning! Focus on abiding in Christ and shining forth His character and who He made you to be, will be sanctified and glorified by Him as He produces His life in and through you; as the IMAGO DEI shines forth in and through your life!

**5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. (John 15:5)**

**1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:1-2)**



22 to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, 23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. (Ephesians 4:22-24)