THE IMAGO DEI

“Manhood & the Image of God”

Genesis 2:4-17

Sunday, October 9, 2016

By David A. Ritchie

“Heavenly Father, you are our Creator and Redeemer. You have made us, and in Christ your Son, you remake us, by bringing beauty out of our brokenness. Today, I pray that your Spirit would shine light into our darkness. Bring clarity where there is confusion. Bring repentance where there is sin. Bring life where there is death. We pray this in the might name of Jesus, AMEN.

I. Introduction

- The summer of 2015 seemed to introduce a new front to the culture wars. The Olympian Bruce Jenner took the new name of Caitlyn and began to identify as a woman.
- Seemingly overnight, we have been thrust into an age of unprecedented confusion when it comes to gender in which we are asking questions that have never really been asked and challenges that have never been encountered.
- The new cultural orthodoxy would demand us to acknowledge the validity of a so-called gender-spectrum, wherein there is no true distinction between men and women, but rather men and women simply describe two arbitrary ends of a rather fluid spectrum.
- What is our response?
- First and foremost, we must not be mockers, who snicker and scorn.
For some people this is not a theoretical issue; rather this is a personal issue or at least an issue that deeply affects those we love.

Thus, a Christian response to transgender and intersex must always be love; a posture of seeking to understand and serve.

But if we are to have a way forward we must not take the notions of manhood and womanhood for granted, as if we already knew what they meant. Rather, we must seek to rediscover what gender. We must seek to understand the goodness of gender as part of God's good creation that is now broken and marred by sin.

Contra to the social sciences of today, the Genesis account would seem to suggest that the gender binary is one of the ways humanity images God: So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” (Genesis 1:27, ESV).

The distinction of men and women and a biblical distinction.

Created equally in the image of God, but they image God differently.

So for the next two weeks I want to attempt to explore how manhood and womanhood were created to bear the image of the Triune God.

There will be areas of overlap in this study. Just because I say something is true of the design of men, does not mean that it is not also true of women; or vice versa. What it does mean is that men and women with design and purpose.

Remember if God is our creator, we will find our truest liberty by embracing our design.

We are not free in sin any more than a fish is free when it is out of water.

Let’s tackle the topic of “Manhood & the Image of God.”

A few ground rules. Men open your heart to conviction and confrontation. Married women, let the Holy Spirit be the Holy Spirit.

Let’s begin by exploring 1.) The Design of Manhood, 2.) The Brokenness of Manhood, and 3.) The Redemption of Manhood.

II. The Text
1.) The Design of Manhood.

• Created with a purpose (Gen. 2:7a)
  o “The image is of a potter and clay: God as the Artist is bonded to his work. The image signifies a deliberate, not accidental creation.”

  o Man is created with purpose, intentionality, and design; not a mere accident of an arbitrary or accidental process

• Designed as a spiritual being in fellowship with God (Gen. 2:7b-8)
  o The words “breathe,” “breath,” and “living creature” all derive from the same Hebrew root which means “spirit.” You could even say that God inspired into man the spirit of life and the man a spirit of life.

  o Man was created to be spiritual.

  o “God’s placement of the man in the garden suggests that humanity is meant for fellowship in the garden, with God, its Creator and Gardener.”


---


2 Ibid., 86.
○ As a sacred space where God meets with man, Eden is characterized, not just as a garden, but a prototypical tabernacle/temple.\(^3\)
○ Thus, deep spirituality is becoming of a true masculinity.

**Designed for cultivation (Gen. 2:5, 15)**

○ “The reason for the absence of plant life is specifically stated: “the LORD God had not sent rain,” and “there was no man to work the ground” (v. 5cd). There is a subterranean source of water (v. 6), but it by itself is evidently insufficient to support plant life, leading to the critical missing item—the labor of a farmer. All this prepares the reader for the principal clause in v. 7, the creation of the first man, whose occupation will be agriculture.”\(^4\)

○ Men are called cultivate; to unfold the latent potential within God’s creation
○ This is displayed through exercising dominion through vocation
○ Work with excellence and integrity
○ But cultivation is also a call toward the home
○ Be a man “of the second-shift”
○ Pursue your wife
○ Pursue your children
○ Be a servant
○ Men, how are you cultivating

**Designed to protect and provide (Gen. 2:15)**

○ To preserve “keep” the goodness – the peace (shalom) – of God’s creation
○ To be on guard against physical and spiritual harm
○ Provision here is to be understood as more than just a paycheck, but rather, providing peace, permanence, and security\(^5\)
○ This requires positively engaged presence
○ *You may not have to go fight a war, but you will need to get out of your chair!*

**Designed to be submitted to the word of God (Gen. 2:16-17)**

○ Why would God make this prohibition?
○ The tree of life was a type of Edenic sacrament: wherein man, by a tangible means, interacted with God in such a way to pledge covenant fidelity\(^6\)
○ To abstain from the tree of knowledge too was an act of trust
○ *We were not created to judge good and evil for ourselves; rather, were created to discern good and evil while walking in communion with our Creator God.*
○ John Calvin: *Concerning the tree of knowledge of good and evil, we must hold, that it was prohibited to man, not because God would have him to stray like a sheep, without judgment and without choice; but that he might not seek to be*

---

3 Idid., 85.


wiser than became him, nor by trusting to his own understanding, cast off the yoke of God, and constitute himself an arbiter and judge of good and evil.”

• Designed to speak words of life (Gen. 2:19; 3:20)
  ○ Our words have a creative power that can evoke both life and death.
  ○ “Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits.” (Proverbs 18:21, ESV).
  ○ Fathers use your words to bless your children when they go to bed at night.

• Implications
  ○ Single women: demand this standard of those who would pursue you
  ○ Married women: encourage this within your husbands
  ○ Men: single or married, call this out of one another; like iron sharpens iron

2.) The Brokenness of Manhood.

• Sin shattered and fractured the image of God in man, to where now what we often see is a perversion of the image of God

• Selfish passivity of Adam (Gen. 3:12)
  ○ Instead of engaged positive presence, we see withdrawal into entertainment, comfort, hobbies, substance, or work.
  ○ Instead of words of life, we see passive aggressive criticism.
  ○ Blame-shifting is weak tactic of wickedness.
  ○ The inability to acknowledge wrong is an exposure of weakness, not strength.
  ○ Selfish passivity is also reflected through sarcasm and bitterness.
  ○ Can you be confronted, or is there always a consequence?

• Active aggression of Cain (Gen. 4:6-8)
  ○ Active aggression is using one’s power for selfish gain instead of the flourishing of one’s responsibility.
  ○ When I was preparing this sermon earlier this week, I was unaware that the events of the weekend would produce yet another vivid example of a perversion manhood, in way Donald Trump talked about using his stardom to take advantage of women in 2005.
  ○ I know politics, like any other idol, is a touchy subject. But I feel like it would be cowardly not to address this.
  ○ The words and the actions he bragged about should rightly be denounced by God’s people. It serves no one to minimize sin. His words were not crude or lewd, they were cruel and predatory. Whether it is Donald Trump or Bill Clinton or Ted Kennedy, this is sin. To use and abuse women with one’s position of power and influence is an utter perversion of how God designed power and how God designed manhood.
  ○ And hear me: don’t worry; we will get to Hillary in this series (especially when we talk about the sanctity of human life).
  ○ Regardless if you think that voting for Trump is a morally justifiable or necessary position, you can call evil “evil”; and you can teach your daughters to expect better of men, and your boys to be better men.
  ○ Real men do not talk that way. Real men do not act that way.

• We must call out brokenness of men for what it is so that we can find a better way

---

7 John Calvin and John King, *Commentary on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*, vol. 1 (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 118.
• Pastor Matt Chandler has said: “It is a fact of history that wherever men aspire to what the Bible calls men to be, families and cities and nations flourish; and wherever the Biblical call for manhood is denied and despised, families and cities and nations will suffer death and decay.”

• And this is what the biblical account shows us. Adam fails. Death ensues.

• K.A. Matheus: “Because of man’s sin […] his origins also became his destiny”\(^8\)

• From dust we came and to dust we will return (Gen. 3:19).

• The wages of sin is always some form of death (Gen. 2:17; Rom. 6:23)

• And if you are content with causing death around you, know this. Men, you will stand before a holy judge one day to bear an account. On that day you will not be able to make excuses or raise your voice to get out of it.

• The word of God calls us to repentance – to seek forgiveness, to seek restoration, and to display a true change.

3.) The Redemption of Manhood.

• Despite how hard we might try in our own strength, you fail, I fail, we fail (Rom. 7: what I want to do, I don’t do; and what I know is wrong, that is what I do). All men know that we cannot bear the way of who we are called to be. This is why we withdraw into shame. It is why we pretend like we are strong when we are weak.

• Our flesh craves comfort over faithfulness, and our best intentions fall short.

• We are like the valley of dry bones who will rise only by the supernatural power of the Spirit (Ezek. 37:9-10).

• Interestingly, the language of Genesis 2 shows that it is The Spirit/breath of God that imparts the image of God to man. So too the New Testament shows us that this image is restored by the same Spirit.

• And the Holy Spirit can be ours because of Jesus.

• Whereas men in their brokenness use their power to selfishly withdraw or use others for their own ends and convenience, Jesus uses his power to serve (cf. Jn.13:3-5).

• Instead of withdrawal and blame-shifting, Adam should have intervened. He should have protected his garden from the serpent, and pointed his wife to the tree of life even if it cost his life. But Jesus did what Adam could not, he took the penalty that he did not deserve. He received stinging venom of sin. He died on a tree, so that through his resurrection he might become our source of life.

• Because of Jesus’s life, death, and resurrection, we will have life and access to the Spirit

• In him are “new creations” (2 Cor. 5:17)

• What has been broken by sin, Jesus Christ redeems and restores by the power of his Spirit.

• Here these words of from the Apostle Paul, and let them stir us to rise to the occasion:

>“Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles\(^9\) do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. But that is not the way you learned Christ!”— assuming

---


9 “Gentiles” here is best understood as “not God’s people”
that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.” (Ephesians 4:17–24, ESV)

• This is true manhood. Women let this be your expectation. Men let this be our aspiration. And by the grace of God, let it be what we are known for. Amen.

Questions for Community Groups:

1) Read Genesis 2:4-17. What are some attributes of biblical manhood that are revealed in this passage? Men, how can you aspire to these attributes? Women, how can you encourage these attributes in men?

2) In Genesis 3, in what way does Adam fail to live up to the biblical design of manhood? How do men continue in Adam’s sin today?

3) How does Christ display true manhood that has been redeemed from the power of sin (cf. John 14:3-5)? How does Christ empower men to pursue biblical manhood today?