

FROM THE BEGINNING SOME THINGS HAVE BEEN SO!

A Look at Male-female Relations

Militant feminism in our culture has had its creeping effects upon our society. Femininity with all its graciousness and charm is wont to disappear. Masculinity is being downgraded and discarded. We suffer from a tragedy of the loss of both masculinity and femininity, manliness and motherliness!

Feminists demand to imitate masculinity and queer homosexuals demand their right to imitate femininity. How the world is turned upside down by the degradation of modern culture!

Just as Jesus spoke about the tragedy of divorce -- "from the beginning it hath not been so," (Matthew 19:8) -- Christians need to speak up in the affirmative about the design and role of male and female in today's society. Some things about men and women are true today, have been true even from the beginning of creation, and will be true as long as male and female distinctions last.

Jesus affirmed some things were true from the beginning (Matthew 19:8, note that the words "beginning of creation" are used in Mark 10:6), Paul argued from the design of creation (1 Corinthians 11:3, 7-9; 1 Timothy 2:13-14), and Peter even mentioned the continuity of natural events in his discussion of coming of Christ (2 Peter 3:4).

Men and women are equal in the sight of God but they have differing natures, functions, and places of responsibility. Woman is submissive to man from creation. She was not relegated to submission only if she is a married woman, nor only because of the Eve's sin in the Garden. God's original design was for woman to be a helper and follower and to be in submission to man.

There was a *creation order*.

1. *Man was created first* (Genesis 2:7). Paul reminded the Corinthians that man was not from the woman, rather, the woman was from the man (1 Corinthians 11:7-8). Further he stated the order of creation was one reason for men to lead in worship (1 Timothy 2:8, 13). God could have created both male and female at the same time.

The fact God did not do so shows woman's creation was for the man, on account of his need. Many today act as if male and female were created at the same time but the Bible is clear about this. The order of creation, man first and woman second, involves a priority of roles in leadership and following.

2. *Man was given authority over creation* (Genesis 2:15). He was told to dress and keep the garden. This job of leadership was given to man before woman was created.

3. *Man was made in the image of God and for His glory.* There is some distinction to be understood here since Paul said man is the "image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man" (1 Corinthians 11:7). Woman is not made in the image of man but of God. Yet, woman was to be the glory of man. Man magnifies and honors God in his leading role, woman magnifies and honors man in her supportive role.

4. *Man was the one to give names.* He was given the responsibility of naming the animals (Genesis 2:19-20), thus initiative and leadership of man began before woman was created. Adam also designated his partner by nature as "woman" (Genesis 2:23), and by

name, "Eve" (Genesis 3:20), as she was the "mother of all living."

5. *Man, not woman, was given the command by God about eating of the tree* (Genesis 2:16-17). This was also prior to the creation of woman. Evidently the way to woman came to know of the forbidden tree was through the man.

6. *Man was considered in need of help, thus the subsequent creation of the woman* (Genesis 2:18, 21-24). She completed what was needed in him. She was created on account of his need; she is *from* man and *for* man (1 Corinthians 11:8-9).

7. *Man is the head of the woman* (1 Corinthians 11:3). Christ is stated to be the head of man, and as man recognizes he is subordinate to Christ, his head, so the woman must recognize she is subordinate to her head, man.

The equality of creation did not obviate the distinctions in design which God intended in the creation.

There were *creation obligations*.

Man was told to rule, dress, and keep the creation. Woman was told to help the man, to be involved in multiplying and

replenishing the earth, and to function in motherhood. She was dependent upon the man. He was the *provider*, she was the *companion, nurturer, helper, and mother*.

Man was to be related to the things of creation while woman was to be related to the persons of the man and to children. Man's primary call was to lead; woman's primary call was to help him lead.

This relationship was not reversible. The woman was created *for* the man, not the man *for* the woman (1 Corinthians 11:9). She was to be in the supportive role, he was to be in the leading role. The attempt to reverse these creation obligations was the major problem in the first sin.

These roles and functions were different and distinct in their nature, but they were equal in the relations to God.

There were *creation obstacles*.

1. *Note four levels of authority*. There was God, then man, then woman, and last the animals.

2. *Note the first sins reversed these roles of authority*. The animal (serpent) took the lead over the woman, the woman took the

lead over the man, and man disregarded God's leadership when he followed the suggestion of the woman.

3. *God called Adam, not Eve, to be responsible.* Since God had given man the command about the tree prior to the creation of woman (Genesis 2:16-17), God called upon the man to give account (Genesis 3:9-11). Eve must have learned about the eating of the tree through Adam; thus God called him to account for both himself and Eve.

4. *Adam excused his responsibility, denying his leadership.* He tried to blame the woman but God would not accept such deviousness.

5. *Adam listened instead of leading.* Eve led instead of listening. Both stepped out of the place God appointed for them, both perverted the creation order and obligation.

6. *God rejected the leadership and dominion of the woman.* Note that God did not excuse either Adam or Eve because of the subtlety of the serpent. The real problem was the rejection by both Adam and Eve of the creation design and function. Therefore God restated that design and reinstated the correct functions of order,

place and authority.

Conclusions

God's statement to Eve that her husband would rule over her was nothing new. God simply repeated the original design and order of creation. There was no alteration in their relationship; God designed woman to be in submission to man, under his leadership.

The relation of male and female today is the same as in the garden. Man has been given the obligation to provide, to rule, to lead, to be in authority. These are his functions by right of creation design. Woman is to be in submission, to help, to assist, to nurture, to complete what man needs in his role.

Sin entered into the world and brought many changes. Submission to man was not one of those changes for that was the original design. Cultural changes in modern countries today may deny these verities. Such insubordination to God's creative designs will only bring about the perversion of civilization. The world may call it "progress," but Christians must call it "perversion."

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