
Male and Female He Created Them: Observations from God's Design of Gender and Marriage

Genesis 1:26-28²⁶ Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."²⁷ So God created man in His [own] image; in the image of God He created him; **male and female He created them.**²⁸ Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

What may be quickly overlooked is the clause "male and female He created them." It may seem almost a given to those who are familiar with the Bible. However, one must understand that this passage in Genesis 1 is the first statement regarding *anything* to do with humanity, and everything stated is setting a precedent; it is establishing God's designed order; it is truly laying down what is to be considered normal in all of history which is to follow.

The concept of "them" being created "male and female" is loaded with meaning. The idea of marriage and gender are inextricably linked, and cannot be misunderstood without horrible consequences. This passage calls us to recommit ourselves to some serious and almost completely forsaken concepts:

1. The primary purpose of gender is procreation (the bearing and raising of children).

As much as modern day theologians and Bible students seek to redefine the marriage relationship as being predominantly for companionship, personal (self-defined) enjoyment and self-actualization, one glaring truth is obvious. **There is only one true purpose of gender, male and female, that cannot be met in any other relationship – that is the purpose of procreation.** If companionship or assistance alone was in view, those "needs" could be met by any number of solutions – baseball teams, fishing buddies, shopping "sisters," partnerships, friendships, etc. However, gender truly has its unique primary purpose only with the view of bearing children. Though companionship, personal enjoyment (as defined by God in selfless love for one's mate), and even God-defined actualization in becoming one's best may be included, only procreation *requires* gender. Marriage (and gender) seems to singularly relate to the earthly, temporal unit of a male and female primarily to raise children. Jesus seems to indicate this when He comments on the state of those resurrected:

For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. (Mark 12:25)

Will we, as resurrected beings, in the absence of gender and marriage, not enjoy life or experience companionship? This is truly absurd.

Rom 1:26-27²⁶ For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature.²⁷ Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

Διὰ τοῦτο παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς πάθη ἀτιμίας, αἷ τε γὰρ θήλειαι αὐτῶν μετέλλαξαν τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν εἰς τὴν παρὰ φύσιν, ²⁷ ὁμοίως τε καὶ οἱ ἄρσενες ἀφέντες τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν τῆς θηλείας ἐξεκαύθησαν ἐν τῇ ὀρέξει αὐτῶν εἰς ἀλλήλους, ἄρσενες ἐν ἄρσεσιν τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην κατεργαζόμενοι καὶ τὴν ἀντιμισθίαν ἣν ἔδει τῆς πλάνης αὐτῶν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἀπολαμβάνοντες.

χρῆσιν (*chreesin* – use) = only 2x (v.26 & 27); φυσικός (*phusikos* – natural, as in "nature") = only 3x (v. 26, 27 & 2 Pet 2:12); θήλυς (*theelus* – female) = only 5x (v. 26, 27, Matt 19:4; Mark 10:6; Gal 3:28, from θηλή *nipple* cp. *θάω *to suckle and* θηλή *nipple*; see also θηλάζω *to be sucking*, Matt 21:16; 24:19; Mark 13:17; Lu 11:27; 21:23; 23:29)

1 Tim 2:11-15¹¹ Let a woman learn in silence with all submission.¹² And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence.¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve.¹⁴ And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.¹⁵ Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.

1 Tim 5:14 Therefore I desire that *the* younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully.

Titus 2:3-5³ the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things --⁴ that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,⁵ to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

Ps 127:3-5³ Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, The fruit of the womb is a reward.⁴ Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one's youth.⁵ Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them; They shall not be ashamed, But shall speak with their enemies in the gate.

Ps 128:1-6 A Song of Ascents. Blessed *is* every one who fears the LORD, Who walks in His ways. ² When you eat the labor of your hands, You *shall be* happy, and *it shall be* well with you. ³ Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine In the very heart of your house, Your children like olive plants All around your table. ⁴ Behold, thus shall the man be blessed Who fears the LORD. ⁵ The LORD bless you out of Zion, And may you see the good of Jerusalem All the days of your life. ⁶ Yes, may you see your children's children. Peace *be* upon Israel!

The view of marriage today which relegates children to an appendage invariably alters God's design for marriage, and rejects the clear teaching of the Word. Doing so distorts the meaning and purpose of marriage, and ushers in the redefinition that we see today. If marriage is primarily for pleasure, then pleasure can be had with many partners or identical gender, etc. It thus misses the point of what God intends in marriage.

Motherhood, far from being the curse or prison sentence that it is presented as being today, is at the very core of a woman's God-designed, God-ordained, eternity-impacting purpose. Women of today pursue every possible means of personal fulfillment all the while running away from God's perfect plan. Men follow selfishly along and promote such a view for personal pleasure apart from responsibility (and the required maturity that fatherhood demands, and for economic affluence that comes from a wife that mimics the husband's role in pursuing a career.

The blessings/commands to follow reinforce the expectation of children within marriage: Be fruitful and multiply... It is the desired conclusion in God's design for gender and marriage.

2. Marriage (gender) is designed for two people and only two people.

By design, God created a dual (two-person) unit. The idea of male and female brings with it the basic idea that a relationship involves only two individuals. It is not a circle of three, four, six, or one hundred. It is an implied relationship of two and only two people. It is defined as two individuals that become one unit, one flesh. To add or remove from these two is to depart from God's design of marriage and gender.

Marriage is designed for two people for life. It follows logically, then, that God fully condemns adultery and sexual immorality of every kind (which is further reinforced in the Law and throughout Scripture). This would clearly stand against polygamy of any kind (polygyny, polyandry, group marriage, bigamy, and even serial monogamy). Monogamy is God's clear teaching here.

3. Marriage (gender) can only be for two people of the opposite gender.

Not only is the creation design defined by only two individuals as gender itself naturally limits, but it also requires two of opposite gender. The relationship is not a unit of male/male or of female/female. God's creation of gender requires one male and one female. No other relationship fulfills the "one of each" design, and no other "one of each" combination produces children.

4. Marriage (gender) requires two which are similar yet different.

By God creating "them" as "male and female," He both groups them together (both are human and distinct from animals or any other category of creation) and He distinguishes them from one another. They are similar (both human) but different (male and female). This suggests, as a grouping, that they go together, and they alone go together, being unique from all other created beings. It suggests, also, that the male is not the female, and the female is not the male. They are different in multiple ways by God's design, with different roles, purposes, and functions (which the Word makes clear as early as in Genesis 2).

5. Marriage (gender) assumes the design and blessing of physical intimacy by God.

God created gender and designed and blessed physical intimacy within the bounds of marriage. It is a beautiful thing that God designed for specific people (a man and a woman) once they are married.

6. Marriage (gender) would assume a relationship between adults.

It would preclude the marrying of a child or infant.

7. Marriage (gender) would be limited to human relationships.

As seen in the prohibitions of the Law.

Summary Application:

- Marriage is designed by God, and therefore defined by God.
- Marriage is defined by gender, and the primary purpose of gender is to bear children.
- Marriage is uniquely designed for bearing children. God designed sexual intimacy to be experienced and enjoyed within marriage only, with the normal outcome being the conception of children. Therefore, physical intimacy outside of marriage (which often produces children), and marriage that rejects the bearing of children are both outside the plan of God. As a choice, children without marriage and marriage without children are deviations of God's plan.
- Motherhood is not an appendage to a woman's life, but the very essence of it by God's design.