



Battle of the Sexes: Session 3- Womanhood
Proverbs 31:1-10; Genesis 2-3; Ephesians 5:22-33

Introduction

There is a Youtube video (Girl Defined ministries) about the six misconceptions of biblical womanhood:

- Biblical womanhood does not mean women are doormats
- Biblical womanhood does not mean women are wimps
- Biblical womanhood does not mean that women are of lesser value
- Biblical womanhood does not mean that women will throw their brains away
- Biblical womanhood does not mean that women's lives will be boring
- Biblical womanhood does not mean that women have to be the perfect

Are there other misconceptions that can exist? How does this list challenge men that are hearing these misconceptions? How does this list challenge women?

Transition: In our groups we have discussed about manhood and then about sameness and these have been in light of understanding our bearing the image of God (imago Dei). The discussion continues as we define and apply what it means for us to be a church that properly understands biblical womanhood and what it means for the body of Christ.

1. Defining Biblical Womanhood

Have a volunteer to read Proverbs 31:1-10

- 10 An excellent wife, who can find?
For her worth is far above 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 evil
All the days of her life.**
- 13 She looks for wool and flax
And works with her hands in delight.**
- 14 She is like merchant ships;
She brings her food from afar.**
- 15 She rises also while it is still night
And gives food to her household
And portions to her maidens.**
- 16 She considers a field and buys it;
From her earnings she plants a vineyard.**
- 17 She girds herself with strength**

And makes her arms strong.
 18 She senses that her gain is good;
 Her lamp does not go out at night.
 19 She stretches out her hands to the distaff,
 And her hands grasp the spindle.
 20 She extends her hand to the poor,
 And she stretches out her hands to the needy.
 21 She is not afraid of the snow for her household,
 For all her household are clothed with scarlet.
 22 She makes 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*,
 And supplies belts to the tradesmen.
 25 Strength and dignity are her clothing,
 And she smiles at the future.
 26 She opens her mouth in 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 bless her;
 Her husband *also*, and he praises her, *saying*:
 29 “Many daughters have done nobly,
 But you excel them all.”
 30 Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain,
But a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised.
 31 Give her the product of her hands,
 And let her works praise her in the gates.

A definition for biblical womanhood is stated as when a female has a healthy fear of God and a correct understanding of beauty.

Do you agree or disagree with this definition? Would you add anything to it?

Proverbs 31:1-10 is a poem that is an acrostic. The woman is trustworthy, industrious, intelligent, and kind. She adds dignity to the family and has much foresight and prudence. For all this she is much loved in her family and is the real center of the home. Above all she fears God. The final verse speaks eloquently against the tendency to regard her role as of inferior significance.¹

How do these verses describe self-worth? How does this verse set women free from having to be “perfect?” How do these verses free men from having to pursue the “perfect” wife?

Sermon Notes:

¹ Garrett, D. A. (1998). [The Poetic and Wisdom Books](#). In D. S. Dockery (Ed.), *Holman concise Bible commentary* (p. 242). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

2. What a Woman is Not...

Some of the points for what a woman is not:

- Less than a man.
- Same as a man
- Incomplete unless she is married.
- Defined by her appearance.

Which one of these attributes challenge your thinking of womanhood the most? Why?

When we consider biblical womanhood, we are talking about how we are equal in value as men but there are also distinct purposes. Here are verses that connect to these points.

Have a volunteer to read Genesis 2:18, 20-25

- 18 Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.”²**
- 20 The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.**
- 21 So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place.**
- 22 The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man and brought her to the man.**
- 23 The man said,
“This is now bone of my bones,
And flesh of my flesh;
She shall be called Woman,
Because she was taken out of Man.”**
- 24 For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.**
- 25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.**

How would you describe the relationship that is described in these verses between man and God; woman and God; and man and woman? How do these verses speak to equality? How do they speak to different purposes?

The fact that the woman came from the man, which itself so impressed the man that he exclaimed “bone of my bones,” indicates that the two are inherently the same in nature, even as one connective substance. Ultimately, they have their mutual source in God (cf. 1 Cor 11:12), for neither creates the other. Therefore, when God created woman, he gave her unique identity and purpose in life. God designed a specific role for woman to fill, and, by living out that role, to increase human flourishing just as it was for the man. She is called helper. So, we can see this teaching of being equal in value, yet we can see that there are distinctions in their purpose.

² [*New American Standard Bible: 1995 update*](#). (1995). (Ge 2:18). La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

One pastor stated: Where man's primary responsibility is to lead, woman's responsibility is to support. She is a helper by God's design in Genesis 2. She is not devalued by that, but she is honored by that, in the same way that the Son is honored before the Father.

But as we will see, just as sin messed up the perfection that God designed, so also can our understanding of true manhood and womanhood become marred if we do not see these terms defined in light of Scripture. Far from being a demeaning roll, the Bible uses this term to communicate the unique strength and ability that God has entrusted to women. Women work together with their male compliments to cultivate the earth and to spread God's image throughout the world.

Have a volunteer to read Genesis 3:15-19.

- 15 (God speaking to the serpent) And I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between your seed and her seed;
He shall bruise you on the head,
And you shall bruise him on the heel.”**
- 16 To the woman He said,
“I will greatly multiply
Your pain in childbirth,
In pain you will bring forth children;
Yet your desire will be for your husband,
And he will rule over you.”**
- 17 Then to Adam He said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife,
and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, ‘You
shall not eat from it’;
Cursed is the ground because of you;
In toil you will eat of it
All the days of your life.**
- 18 “Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you;
And you will eat the plants of the field;**
- 19 By the sweat of your face
You will eat bread,
Till you return to the ground,
Because from it you were taken;
For you are dust,
And to dust you shall return.”**

In the prior verses, the role relationship between man and woman is indicated directly and implicitly. First, the participant structure of Genesis 2–3 shows implicitly the hierarchy of creation as far as purpose: God, the man, woman, and animal (serpent). But this was reversed in the fall: the woman listens to the serpent, the man listens to the woman, and no one listens to God.

What does our world say about womanhood? Why is the origin of the sin we experience today so much from not listening to God? How can we change that?

As you see the judgment announced, each one's relationship is defined: now the serpent is subject to the “seed” of the woman, the woman subject to the man, and all subject once again

under the Lord. And this is the beauty amidst one of the, in a sense, the worst chapter in the Bible, Genesis 3:15 is a promise of grace. It's called the *protoevangelium*—the first gospel. And it's a promise that God says with the entrance of sin in the world, "I'm going to send one from woman who will conquer sin and Satan and who will bring my redemption."

What does it tell you about God that He promised the coming of Jesus in the midst of their sinful act? What do these verses tell you about how God views the relationship of women to God? (we are all guilty and in need of the salvation provided in Jesus).

Transition: Both men and women share equal responsibility in their rebellion against God in Genesis 3. Now, because of the fall, *woman wrestles with particular sins and struggles*. The intimacy she shared with God and man has now been marred by sin. Instead of joyful submission and partnering together, as God intended, the woman and the man now live at odds to one another.

Sermon Notes:

3. What a Godly woman is...

Here are some thoughts for how Scripture defines godly women:

- Understands beauty (1 Samuel 16:7; 1 Peter 3:3-4; Proverbs 31:30; Galatians 5:22)
- Realizes she is gifted (Ephesians 2:10)
- Realizes womanhood is a call to courageous living (Galatians 3:27-28)
- Realizes she needs to be born again (John 3:3; 2 Corinthians 5:17)

From your personal experience, who is a woman that has exhibited these attributes? How can these lessons help answer any misconceptions about biblical womanhood? Do any of these attributes challenge your thinking about biblical womanhood? Why?

Sermon Notes:

4. Applying Biblical Womanhood

Have a volunteer to read Ephesians 5:21-27, 33.

21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

22 Wives submit to your husbands as to the Lord.

23 For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.

24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her

26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,
27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

33 However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.”

What is your first reaction when you hear the word "submit?" What do you think it means to submit? What is the hardest thing about submitting to someone else? What are some negative responses people have to the idea of submission? How does a wife's respect for her husband help fulfill God's purpose for marriage? What does this passage say about a husband's sacrificial love for his wife?

The term of submission in the Scripture is a reference to understanding authority in our lives. In God's plan and purpose, we all live under His authority. Within the family unit there is an order of authority as well that comes from the responsibilities we share. It's important to note that this subjection does not mean inferiority. It is clear that male and female are both created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27) and that in Christ, where personal worth is concerned, there is "neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). However, God has placed all of us in differing positions of authority and submission. The man may be in authority at home but submissive at work. The woman may be in submission at home and in authority at work. The point is, all social order depends on people's willingness to work together and ability to determine who is the head of certain endeavors. God's intention is that the husband be the head of the relationship with his wife.³

Read Philippians 2:5-11. In what ways did Jesus submit? How does our submission make us like Jesus? How does our submission demonstrate our relationship with Jesus?

The statement is that if a woman is not gospel-centered she will be self-centered.

How does this statement challenge you? What are ways that you have seen women live a gospel-centered life versus a self-centered life?

Transition: Created with a unique strength to serve as helper alongside man, the woman's task has been made difficult by sin, and she now seeks control and to oppose headship.

What qualities do you see in Scripture that relate to a woman being of equal value and different purpose? What do you see in biblical women that shows how she sought to be submissive even when circumstances were not ideal? How does this relate to the call of men to relate/honor women?

Sermon Notes:

³ Anders, M. (1999). *Galatians-Colossians* (Vol. 8, p. 173). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

Application

1. Because of Jesus' work on the cross, all of us can live in the ways we've been called to. For women specifically, it is a call to joyful, truly desired submission in the home to their loving husband. Discuss a way that you can demonstrate submission in your home this week.

2. The battle of the sexes shows that men and women do not always lead and love the way God has called them to, yet, we all have a call to demonstrate Christ at all times to others no matter what to further the gospel. Think of a way that you can demonstrate the gospel this week to someone at work or in your neighborhood that would make an impact.

3. Spend time in prayer for the women in our church that they will be godly wives, mothers, friends, and co-heirs in Christ!