

## Spiritual Warfare: Role Reversal, Pt. 2 - Conflict and Confusion

Genesis 3:8-19: 4:7

Last week we looked at how Satan reversed the roles that Adam and Eve played, causing them to rebel against God, disobeying His word. God's sequence for creation was man to woman, while Satan subverted this order by going from woman to man.

### **The Result of Sin – Conflict**

Genesis 3:16 – The curse God places on the woman; she will desire to rule over her husband, but he will stop her.

### **The Nature of the Ruined Relationship After Sin**

Sin has the upper hand. This is a description of misery, not marriage. What is being said here? The key to understanding this conflict is the connection between the last words of Genesis 3:16 and Genesis 4:7 – “you must rule over it.” For Cain, God is telling him that *sin's desire is for you, but you must rule over it*. For Adam and Eve, it means that *when sin has the upper hand in woman, she will desire to overpower or subdue or exploit man. And when sin has the upper hand in man, he will respond in like manner and with his strength subdue her, or rule over her*.

Both sexes are depraved and corrupted by sin.

*The essence of sin is self-reliance and self-exaltation: wanting to be God. First in rebellion against God, and then in exploitation of each other.*

So, the essence of corrupted maleness is the self-aggrandizing effort to subdue and control and exploit women for its own private desires. And the essence of corrupted femaleness is the self-aggrandizing effort to subdue and control and exploit men for its own private desires. And the difference is found mainly in the different weaknesses that each can exploit in one another.

### **We Exploit Different Weaknesses**

As a rule, men have more brute strength than women and so they can intimidate women threatening them with bodily harm even to the point of rape and abuse. Women can become their slaves as men sit around and snap their finger.

Women may not have as much brute strength as men, but she knows ways to subdue him. She can very often run circles around him with her words and where her words fail, she knows the weakness of his lust.

So, what was the relationship supposed to look like?

### **Equality Is Only Part of the Answer**

They were created in the image of God according to Genesis 1:27, and so the relationship they have was supposed to be governed by the following:

--Equality of personhood - one is not superior to the other and their differences don't change this basic truth.

--Equality of dignity - they are to be equally honored as humans in the image of God.

--Mutual respect - men and women should be equally zealous to respect and honor each other.

--Harmony - there should be peaceful cooperation between men and women.

--Complementarity - male and female will not try to duplicate each other but will highlight in each other the unique qualities that make for mutual enrichment.

--Unified destiny - male and female when they come to faith in Christ are “fellow heirs of the grace of life” (1 Peter 3:7). We are destined for an equal enjoyment of the revelation of the glory of God in the age to come.

But that's only part of the answer. Each must know their movements: each must know their roles and responsibilities. *They must relearn how to complement each other.*

So, we must ask this: in the drama of life between man and woman before the fall, what was God's intent for how male and female are to conduct themselves towards each other? What are their roles and responsibilities? We already saw last week that the sequence in creation points to males being the head and women being the helper, but what does that look like? There is more than simple equality.

### **Addressing a Church and Culture in Mass Confusion**

These different responsibilities go right to the heart of the meaning of manhood and womanhood as God created us to be, but they are under attack today. They have been for some time, and the result in our culture is mass confusion.

I would guess that probably four to five generations of men and women have been raised in this country without a positive vision of what it means to be male or female. We have been told many negative things — things we ought not to be, according to the culture, and the cultural mores have changed dramatically and continue to change depending on the whim of the movers and shakers of our society.

But when all of culture's talk is done about what manhood and womanhood is *not*, what have we got? A big void of confusion about what they are. Frustrating, guilt-producing, destructive confusion. And with it a tidal wave of homosexuality, an epidemic of divorce, an increase of violent crime, growing domestic abuse, fatherlessness, transgenderism, and tens of thousands of suicides every year.

*When you tell someone how not to be, but never tell them how they should be, what do you create? A void.*

If the church tells her children not to beat their wife, or manipulate their husband, or not become gay or lesbian, and don't deny your gender, but not tell them how to be masculine and feminine according to Scripture, she is simply abdicating her moral and spiritual responsibility to give them a positive, practical, biblical vision of what it means to be a man and or a woman.

Why has the church and Christian families abdicated their responsibility? Because it's easier. It's easier to think and believe that the children will pick it up by osmosis. It's easy to tear down negative stereotypes, but it's hard and risky work to rebuild the positive archetype. That's not to say our example as Christian parents isn't important, but in a culture such as ours, with all the voices clamoring for attention, our children need to know God's design for masculinity and femininity.

We can criticize our culture all we want. We can challenge the culture all we want, (and we should), but if we in the church do not give our children and our culture Jesus, and what He is calling men and women to be, then we have done them a disservice. Salvation is not only being saved from the wrath of God, but also being changed, transformed into the likeness of Christ, and that includes what it means to be a man and a woman.

You realize what I just said is not popular. It's not popular in some segments the church and not popular in the broader culture. A hundred people wait to be your judge and my judge if you try to develop a positive vision for your daughters of what it means to be feminine, or for your sons of what it means to be masculine. And so, by and large, we don't do it. And we leave them confused — telling them what it's not but not telling them what it is.

So, we must show them what it means to be masculine and what it means to be feminine according to the Word of God.