

Sexuality, Gender and Jesus

Part I: Biblical Gender Roles

January 13, 2013

The Big Idea:

The Bible never commands us to strive for mature masculinity or mature femininity. Instead, the Word of God calls people to become like Christ. The right question is not, 'Am I fulfilling my call to be a biblical man or a biblical woman?' The right question is 'Am I imitating Christ?'"

--Sarah Sumner, *Men and Women in the Church*¹

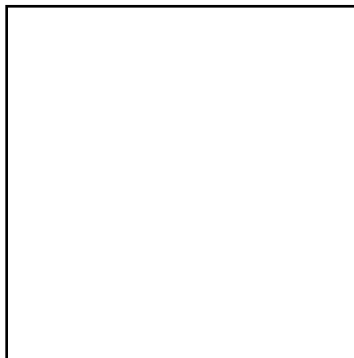
Introduction

"Human sexuality must be understood in light of a variety of influences, including biological, sociological, psychological, theological, as well as gender, emotions, behaviors, attitudes and values... Authentic human sexuality has to do with human beings according to God's design and purpose."²

Four Criteria to Defining an Individual's Sexuality³

Natal Sex: Physical & biological features at birth that determine whether the baby is male or female.

Gender Role: One's gender identity as defined by a particular culture.



Sexual Identity: A person's sexual self concept, the view one has of oneself as a sexual person.

Sexual Orientation: The direction of one's erotic attraction.

Notes:

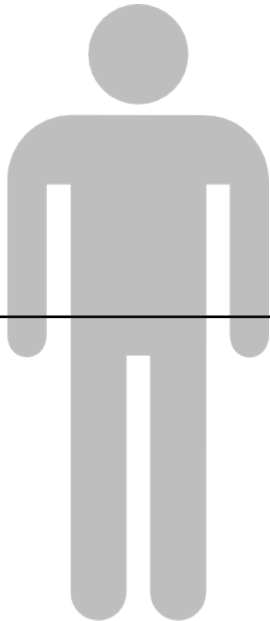
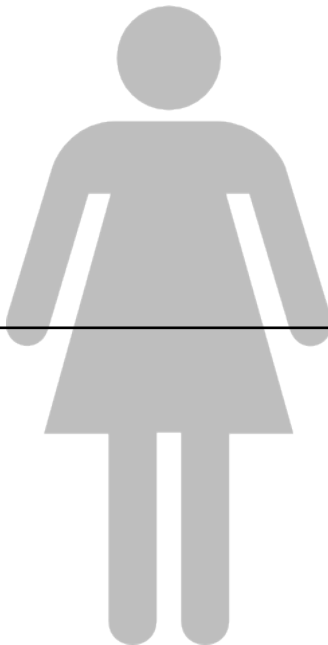
¹ Sarah Sumner, *Men and Women in the Church: Building Consensus on Christian Leadership* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 86.

² Judith K. Balswick and Jack O. Balswick, *Authentic Human Sexuality: An Integrated Christian Approach* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 13-14.

³ Balswick and Balswick, 15-16.

Learning Task ⁴ #1: Men are From _____, Women are from _____

1A: As a large group, use the following charts to **identify** observations about masculinity and femininity in the world. Then, at your table, use the chart to **identify** observations in the Christian community. Be ready to share your observations with the group.

| | Men/Masculinity | Women/Femininity |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| The World |  |  |
| The Christian Community | | |

Notes:

⁴ "A learning task is an open question put to a small group, with all the resources they need to respond... *Learning tasks are not activities*. I am adamant about not using the word activity; it is overused. Our learning task is not to make students active, but to enable them to learn what is important and meaningful to them." Jane Vella, *On Teaching and Learning: Putting the Principles and Practices of Dialogue Education into Action* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008), 46.

1B: As a large group, let's **examine** a few biblical texts about gender roles. As each text is read, we'll take another look at our 'Christian Community' chart and **answer** the following question: "Does this text invite us to change an observation, remove an observation, or add an observation?"

- The Texts: Genesis 1:26-28, Genesis 2:20-25, Judges 4:4-5, Proverbs 31:10-31, Acts 18:24-26, 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, Galatians 3:28, Ephesians 5:21-32, 1 Timothy 2:8-14, 1 Timothy 5:8, Titus 2:1-6, 1 Peter 3:1-2 & 7

Notes:

1C: Using our list (old and new), these passages, and our summary statements, **read** the case study below as a table and **identify** fitting responses to each study. We'll share our responses with the class.

Jack and Jenny recently joined your small group; a couple in their early 30's, they've been married for nearly ten years, and are expecting twins in a few months. Jenny, an esteemed and tenured physics professor at a nearby college, makes significantly more than her husband Jack, a computer programmer for a national technology firm. When the baby arrives in four months, their plan is for Jack to stay home with their twins and for Jenny to continue working, seeing that Jack's salary would not be adequate to support their new family. Jenny's schedule is flexible, and Jack will work part-time from home. In the long term, Jack would like to homeschool their kids while Jenny continues to work.

After a recent sermon series on gender and sexuality, Jenny and Jack are confused. They were told that to be masculine is to lead, provide for, and protect women and to be feminine is to affirm, receive, and nurture the strength and leadership of men. This has created some tension for them. They come to you after small group to seek your counsel. After the group has left, Jack tells you that they are afraid that going through with their plan will violate God's Word. Jenny, starting to cry, tells you that she's never felt so insecure as a woman as she did after that sermon series--she's always felt that this was what God wanted for them. With eager and humble expectation, Jenny and Jack are looking to you to for biblical counsel and guidance.

Notes:

1D: In light of our Big Idea, **commit** to one way to faithfully imitate Christ this week. **Write** your answers on a post-it note and **post** it at the front of the room.

Write Your Commitment Here to Remember It!

A Closing Word: The Eternal View of Gender

“But Jesus answered them, ‘You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.’” [Matthew 22:29-30]

“This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.” [Ephesians 5:32]

Notes:

Learning Task #2: Carpe Eruditio (Seize the Learning)

Sometime this week, take some time to review your notes and a passage of Scripture that particularly struck you. Then, choose one of the following ways to Seize the Learning:

- **Journal** about what it means for Christ to be formed in *you*: what does Christ look like in a person of your gender, age, occupation, and season of life?
- **Draw a Mind Map** of relevant themes and texts to your gender to see what it might mean to be faithful to Christ as a man or a woman.
- **Write a prayer** of thankfulness to God for making you a man or a woman. What reasons do you have to be thankful for being male or female?

For Further Reading

John Piper and Wayne Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*

John Piper, *What's the Difference? Manhood and Womanhood According to the Bible*

Sarah Sumner, *Men and Women in the Church: Building Consensus on Christian Leadership*

Judith K. Balswick and Jack O. Balswick, *Authentic Human Sexuality: An Integrated Christian Approach*

Andreas J. Kostenberger, *God, Marriage, and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation*

A Note on The Learning

For this semester's Hot Topics series, Kyle and Stephanie will be utilizing the principles and practices of **Dialogue Education** to learn with you. Pioneered by Jane Vella, a Catholic missionary, nun, and educator dialogue education believes that the teacher should never do for the learner what she can do her herself. In that sense, there is no teacher: there are only learners of whom the teacher is one.

Jane Vella has written, "The end is learning, the means is dialogue and the purpose is peace." By asking open ended question and engaging in learning tasks (see footnote 4 above) each of us participates in the learning by being attentive to one another and to Christ who is the *dia-logos*, the Word among us. Jesus is who, the how, and the why of our learning.

Our hope is that as we learn together you are able to take your learning to your life in order to be conformed to Christ. This is our hope, and prayer: that through our time together Christ would be formed in you (Galatians 4:19).

In light of this, we commit to come to class each week prepared, with the necessary materials for our learning in-tow, so that meaningful, Christ-centered learning can take place. We invite you to come to each session ready to learn: to engage in learning tasks, to answer questions, and to experience the joy of learning together. Remember: joy is the measure.

Our Coming Sessions

Dates and Topics Subject to Change

| | |
|--|---|
| Session 1: Sexuality, Gender, and Jesus 1.20 ~ LGBTQ, Part I - Understanding the Struggle 1.27 ~ LGBTQ, Part II - A Compassionate Christian Response 2.3 ~ Pornography 2.10 ~ For Men Only & For Women Only Session 2: Hot Topics, Etc. 2.17 ~ Intergenerational Ministry 2.24 ~ Global Outreach Conference 3.3 ~ Politics: To Vote or Not to Vote? 3.10 ~ Politics: Was Jesus a Socialist? 3.17 ~ Entertainment, Culture, and Discernment 3.24 ~ Unfriend Yourself | 3.31 ~ No Class - He is Risen! 4.7 ~ Depression, Despair, and Doubt Session 3: Family Matters 4.14 ~ How Low Can You Go? Living within Your Means 4.21 ~ The Role of the Church in the Family 4.28 ~ No Class - Congregational Meeting 5.5 ~ Parenting for Healthy Adulthood 5.12 ~ No Class - Happy Mother's Day! 5.19 ~ Bullying 5.26 ~ Loving Families with Developmental Disabilities |
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