

Manhood and Womanhood?

Often young siblings, cousins, or classmates tease one another with the common saying, “Girls rule and boys drool,” or its opposite, “Boys rule and girls drool.” Although these things can be said in good fun, the argument of which gender is superior has been carried throughout history and can be a heated, serious discussion. Even today in our world, feminism has grown popular, transgenderism is approved, and prejudice based on gender is practiced in a multitude of ways. In the midst of our dangerous world full of lies, God our Creator has spoken a clear word concerning manhood and womanhood. Let us turn there for guidance.

Genesis 1:26-31 tells of when God made mankind on the sixth day. Please read this passage; I will include verse 27 and 28: **“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.””** In this very crucial passage of Scripture, we see God making man, which refers to him making all of mankind, namely Adam and Eve. Adam, the man, was made first and is given headship as the male, which means that all of the people collectively after him are generally called man, mankind, or humanity. This is shown as God speaks of man, he refers to man as a ‘him’ and a ‘them’ in verse 26 and 27. All people, men and women alike, are unified together in one single race: mankind. We see at the end of verse 27 that God made mankind male and female. Both male and female are in the image of God, which means to bear his resemblance. Men and women resemble God in many different ways, a few of them being our capacity of knowledge, love, and creativity. Male and female are equal in bearing the image of God, which means that we are equal to one another in worth, dignity, and status. Men are not superior to women and women are not superior to men.

This passage in Genesis 1 also teaches us that mankind was made to rule the earth, which is seen in our ability to tame animals and take raw materials and turn them into tools, machines, clothes, structures, and games. This passage also contains that command for mankind to reproduce. Men and women are made to rule the world and to multiply. We are made for relationships; we were made to have a relationship with God as his image bearers, a relationship with creation as its fellow ruler, and a relationship with other people as family. Because we are made for these relationships, it is very unhealthy to be self-centered or to be isolated from everything.

Continuing on, look at Genesis 2:5-9 and 15-25 to see the detailed account of God making man and then woman. Here are a few verses from these passages: **“then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature...Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make a helper fit for him”...So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.”** After God made man, he saw that it was not good for him to be alone, which is a jarring statement compared to the rest of the creation narrative that concludes each newly created thing with saying that God saw that it was good. When God finally makes the woman, creation is finally completed and God sees that it is very good. Women have this special honor of being the final piece added to creation, which causes God to rejoice and then rest from his great work.

As we see God making the woman for Adam, we are told that woman is a helper fit, or corresponding to him. She is made to complete him, as male and female fit together physically and spiritually. Man and woman are complementary to one another, which means that they are different, yet they fit together to make a complete whole. Although we are equal, male and female are also distinct from one another, and these differences should not be hated or avoided, but celebrated. God has made women to be different from men, and he said that it was very good. These differences should be exaggerated so much so that we are worlds apart from one another, but they also should not be minimized so that there is little difference between us at all.

In addition to this passage, other Scriptures say that man is given authority and headship in the home. Men are to be characterized by leadership, protecting and providing for the people around them. The Bible contains many commands for men to ‘be men’ or ‘act like men,’ and these commands urge men to be strong, courageous, and lead as God guides them. Likewise, the Bible says that a woman is supposed to be submissive in the home, being a nurturing helper who also provides for her family. Proverbs 31 speaks of an excellent woman in God’s sight, and she is described as being a strong, hardworking woman who takes care of the people around her and has the inner beauty of fearing the Lord.

These differences are good, and they are unique ways in which we reflect the image of God. Leadership in the home reflects God equally as submission in the home. Leadership in the

home is not being commander who does not listen to anyone else's opinion. The husband and wife are to communicate with one another, and the man must keep the interests of the whole family in mind as he makes a decision. Submission in the home is not doing everything the man says without any thought. The wife should never follow her husband into sin. Yet, even when it is difficult, she must be respectful. We see this teased out in Ephesians 5:22-33.

When we think of masculinity, often we think of strength, courage, and wisdom—and this is true and biblical. However, that does not mean that women do not have these traits as well. Women can also be extraordinarily strong, courageous, and wise, but they are shown in different ways than men. Similarly, when we think of femininity, we often think of beauty, gentleness, and care—once again, true and biblical. Yet, men also have these traits, but also shown in a different way than women. Even if men are superior at doing some things compared to women and even if women are superior at doing some things compared to men, that does not make women or men superior to one another as a gender. We might be better at some things, but we are still equal. Both our equality and our differences are delightful to God.

If we continue in Genesis and read God's curse in verses 14 through 19, we see the relationship between man and woman cursed as well. Because of our sin, there is chaos in our relationships, causing pain. As sinners, we often have a warped idea and false notions of what it means to be a man or a woman. We might wrongly think that manhood is all about being a strong man who can do whatever he wants and treat people however he wants. Women are even tempted to this thinking when it relates to femininity: being an independent woman who can say whatever she wants and manipulate others to do whatever she pleases. Or, men and women can be confused, thinking they just should be passive and let others do whatever they want to them. At your stage of life, you are especially tempted to these false ideas and try to prove yourself among your peers that you are just as developed and mature they are, if not more. You want to show them that you know adult things and can do adults things and look like an adult. Of course, you still want to be a kid, but you definitely do not want to be a baby. Be extremely careful that the ideal of womanhood or manhood that you are striving after is biblical, and not worldly.

Seek to understand how the Bible describes a godly man and a godly woman, and strive after that image. These things matter greatly to our Creator. Ask him to develop and mature you; these things do not just happen with age. Spend time with older men and women in order to learn from them. Becoming who God has made you to be is difficult, but is absolutely beautiful.