

SESSION 13: GENESIS: HEAD AND HELPER

I. Introductory Concepts

A. About Structure

1. Does structure require an assessment of value?
2. Did God design relationships with structure in mind?

B. About Biblical Narrative Literature

1. Narrative literature conveys meaning.
2. Adam and Eve's experience explains and measures our reality.

II. God's Design from the Genesis Narrative

A. Genesis 1: Male/Female Commonality

1. Male and female were created with value. (Gen. 1:26,27)
2. Male and female were given a calling: to love and lead. (Gen. 1:28)

B. Genesis 2: Male/Female Distinctives

1. Adam was created first. (Genesis 2:7)
2. Adam is given an occupation with responsibility before Eve is created. (Genesis 2:15)
3. Adam is instructed by God with the responsibility of leading with His Word. (Genesis 2:16-17)
4. Adam names the animals, a sign of his leadership over creation. (Genesis 2:19-20)
5. Adam is given a helper suitable for him, a phrase that defines the core social identity for both the man and the woman. (Genesis 2:18, 21-22)
6. Adam names his helper. (Genesis 2:23)
7. The man is to leave and initiate a new household. (Genesis 2:24)
8. The temptation seeks to reverse God's original social and spiritual order. (Genesis 3:1-6)
9. God holds Adam, not Eve accountable for this transgression. (Genesis 3:8-9)
10. Adam's response to sin has a passivity attached to it. (Genesis 3:11-12)
11. Adam and Eve's judgment is based on the reversal of the created order. (Genesis 3:17)
12. Adam's judgment falls not only on him (Genesis 3:16-17), but on all those under his leadership. (Romans 5:16-18)
13. Adam renames his wife as an additional sign of his leadership after the fall. (Genesis 3:20)

*We are greatly indebted to Robert Lewis of Fellowship Bible Church Little Rock, author of *Men's Fraternity*, *Quest for Authentic Manhood*, and *Raising a Modern-Day Knight*.

BIBLICAL WOMANHOOD

Discussion Questions:

1. From our Reflection Assignment last week: In what specific ways do you see Depravity (the sinful desires of your own heart) pulling you away from God's Plan for you as a woman? Are there other factors around you that add to this pull? (e.g. Peer pressure, the media, family influences...)
2. What are your thoughts on/reactions to the statement, "All human relationships need structure?"
3. When you hear the terms "Head" and "Helper" do you tend to think one is more valuable or important than the other? Explain.
4. In the list of observations on the Genesis Narrative, which one was most surprising or interesting to you? Why?
5. Genesis describes a reversal of God's intended order—Adam was passive, Eve took over leadership responsibility—and all kinds of heartache that resulted. Describe a more current example from your own experience.
6. What role does **trust** play in our ability to consider and embrace the Head & Helper model for relationships? Who do we have to trust? In what ways is it hard to do?

Reflection Assignment:

How does the Genesis pattern for male and female roles challenge or differ from what you have previously thought?

Passage to Ponder this week: Genesis 2:18-25

Week Thirteen Summary:

So, we've taken a good, hard look at our understanding of Womanhood: what has shaped us and what shape we are in. Now, it's time to at Womanhood from a different angle, not from our cultural view or from our own personal experience and desire, but from God's view and intention. What is His Design for our shape? Who did He create us to be? This is the perfect time to hit the reset button, to "go back to the beginning" and start over again. Or, rather than "beginning" we could say "Genesis." The beginning of the Bible describes the beginning of humanity and God's original design for men and women. The Bible uses "story," the narrative of Adam and Eve, to show us God's intended pattern for male/female relationships and roles. It certainly isn't what we would have come up with, and we may have very mixed feelings about it, but His idea is worth our attention and consideration, don't you think?

"In the beginning," God created men and women with some fundamental commonalities in value and purpose, but He also made us different—intentionally. He made us for different purposes, with different roles and different responses to the world and to each other. He made us in a way that BOTH of us are needed to pull off His grander calling. The man was created first and given *responsibility* and *authority* to fulfill that responsibility. God then created woman. She brought things that the man desperately needed; he alone didn't have what it would take to fulfill the calling on mankind. He needed *help*. Summarizing the core roles in God's design, the man is the *Head* and the woman is the *Helper*. Our natural inclination when we read this might be to assume that this distinction assigns different *value* to the man and the woman. But, that is our misunderstanding. The Bible is clear, both in Genesis and elsewhere, that men and women are equally valuable in God's sight. Both are created in the image of God, and both are equally heirs of His grace. However, any team needs structure to accomplish anything great. All on the team need clarity about their part, what essential elements they bring, their "role" and their responsibilities. We see this in business, in the classroom, on sports teams, and in volunteer organizations. It is also true in families. The CEO is not more important than the Director of Engineering. The Principal is certainly not more valuable than the Teacher. The Committee Chairman is not better than the member in charge of fundraising. And the man is not more important, more valuable, or better than the woman. We just have different roles and responsibilities. As we understand more clearly and clarify our (and our culture's) faulty assumptions about those roles, together we achieve something great, something beautiful.