

Session 3: IDENTITY CRISIS

I. Clarity about our identity is found in our origin.

Why did God create humanity?

Human Purpose (Isaiah 43:7; Genesis 1:27-28)

1. Multiply and fill the earth = To Love
2. Subdue and rule over the earth = To Lead

Key Principle: God created people to love and lead.

Human Resources (Genesis 2:7; 18)

1. The Man
2. The Woman

Why did God create woman?

1. To help man love = Relational interdependence
2. To help man lead = Responsibility beyond self

II. Confusion about our identity is found in the fall.

Pain in Childbearing

Conflict in Marriage

Key Principle: God created the genders to be interdependent rather than independent in fulfilling our common purpose.

BIBLICAL WOMANHOOD

Discussion Questions:

1. From the Reflection Assignment last week, how do you usually gauge when you are wrong in your thinking (or deceived)? Do you have any “red flags” that let you know you are getting off track?
2. Considering the biblical purpose of man and woman together, to love (fill the earth with image-bearers who love God and others) and lead (leading creation in a way to benefit all), what resonates with you and why?
3. How does clarification about the idea of woman as “helper” (indispensable, empowering partner) shape or inform your understanding of your identity?
4. How have you experienced some differences between men and women?
5. What are the possible advantages of these differences in accomplishing God’s plan for humanity? (In other words, why would He want us to be different?)
6. As women, we can experience many states and stages of life--single, married, with or without kids or empty-nesting, to name a few. How can you, in your current circumstance of life, help love and lead creation?

Reflection Assignment...

Specifically, how are you different from the men with whom you live and work? How can these differences contribute to your God-intended purpose? How can you complement or “fill their gaps?” See Genesis 1:28-29.

Passage to Ponder this week... Proverbs 31:10 (Note: “ishshah” in Hebrew means “woman” as well as “wife”)

Week Three Summary ...

Who am I? Why am I here? What is my purpose?

If you don't know what a complex piece of equipment is for, ask the designer—the engineer. We believe God is the designer of life, so if we want to know the purpose of life—of humanity in general or womankind in particular—we would be wise to consult God. As you know, we use the Bible as the basis of truth in this study, and we invite you wherever you are in your spiritual journey to consider God's perspective.

So what does the Bible say about the purpose God had in mind when He created people? Why did he create humanity at all? And having done so, why men AND women? Why different genders? We could speculate for a long time (and have a good laugh) about all the ways God **could** have designed things, but the fact is He did create us, male and female, and He even told us **why**! The creation account in Genesis (and elsewhere in the Bible) tells us that we are created “in God's image,” to give a physical representation of what He is like. We were created to bring Him glory (to demonstrate is “weightiness” or value), to care for the rest of nature on His behalf, and to raise up future generations of image-bearers. For the purposes of this study, we call that the responsibility “to Love and to Lead.”

When God created man, he said that it was not good for the man to be alone. In other words, Humanity could not accomplish God's purpose with only the masculine representative. The man needed a “suitable helper”—the woman. In the Bible, the term “helper” is not a disparaging one; it refers to one who supplies exactly what is lacking. God himself is called our Helper in times of need. All that to say, women have an exalted position in Creation as an indispensable, empowering partner. We supply crucial elements in the Human make up. Men and women are not independent entities. We are relationally **inter**dependent, and together we are called to a lofty purpose which is far greater than any of us could accomplish independently. The Fall left us wounded particularly in a couple of areas where we have great contribution: “Pain in Childbearing” and “Conflict in Marriage”; however, we believe the calling on our lives is worth pursuing together with men in spite of the obstacles. The bottom line is women play a unique and vital role in Humanity's mission to Love and Lead creation. Now we have a choice: embrace God's Design or take a different path. Let's choose wisely and carefully.