

BIBLICAL MANHOOD & WOMANHOOD II

IMAGE OF GOD: MALE & FEMALE

Genesis 1: 26-31

Spend a few minutes reviewing the catechism question for the week you are in before you begin the lesson.

INTRODUCTION

What is necessary for a team to be successful?

There are primarily two things necessary for a team to function successfully. First, each person must clearly understand and passionately embrace the purpose or goal of the team. Second, each person must understand their role on the team and make sure they are fulfilling that role with skill.

The first chapter of the Bible tells us that the human race has been made for a purpose. We are all a part of a “team” with a purpose. Each of us is vital to the fulfilling of that purpose. We do not, however, all contribute to the fulfilling of that purpose in the same way. We have different roles to play, different jobs to do. However, no matter what our role is, we are necessary parts to fulfilling the purpose for which human beings were created. How much we enjoy being a part of the human race depends upon our embracing the purpose for which God created us and the role he has for.

STUDY

In v. 26, what does God say about the purpose of the human race? Why does he make man?

He makes man for the purpose of being like him and representing him on earth. Man is to rule over the earth as God’s appointed king. He is to be like him in his person and to act like him in regards to his creation. But this still doesn’t answer why God made man in his image and made him to rule over the earth. Why didn’t God stop with the creation of the animals in v. 25? Why was it necessary for him to create man, “in his image and after his likeness”? You will need to press the

issue at this point. Consider this illustration: Why does a famous artist make a “self-portrait”? It shows his skill and shows his fans what he looks like. He does it to display his glory as an artist. Have these passages looked up and read: Psalm 8:1, 19:1, Isaiah 6: 3, 43: 6-7, 48:11, Rom 11: 36. (NOTE: These are only a few of hundreds of verses that same the same thing.) God made us in his image to rule over his creation for the glory of his own name. God does all that he does for the glory of his own name. His ultimate purpose in all he does is to reveal his greatness. Human beings exist for the purpose of being like God and representing God in his creation so that He is glorified, i.e. revealed and loved as the great and gracious God that he is.

God created man, male and female, to be like him and to represent him for his glory.

What does it mean to be made in the image of God, after his likeness? First, what is an image, a likeness? Read 1 Samuel 6: 1-11. Note that in vv. 5 & 11 there are “models” of tumors and rats. Model is the same Hebrew word for image. In 2 Kings 16:10, King Ahaz sent a sketch of an altar he saw in Damascus to Uriaiah the priest and told him to build a replica of it in Jerusalem. Sketch is the same word for likeness.

An image or likeness is a representation of a real object. It is like the object but it is not the object that is represented. A photo of you is an image of you. There are many ways it represents you but it is very different from you as well. It cannot talk or move or eat or think. It reveals true things about you but it does not reveal every true thing about you. It is like you but it is very different from you at the same time. (Todd Pickering told me about a realist painter who drew a picture of a cigar and then titled it, “This is not a cigar”. Everyone looking at the picture knew it was a cigar but the title was also accurate for the picture is not a cigar.)

Genesis 5:1 says, “When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth.” What does it mean for Seth to be made in Adam’s image or likeness?

There is not just one way that Seth is like his dad. He would not look exactly like him but there would be many physical resemblances. He would not have exactly the same values, thoughts, emotions, personality,

etc. but he would be like his dad in many of these ways. He is distinct individual with his own life but he is similar to his father in many ways. It is the same way with us and God. We are like God in many ways, not just one. But we are different from him in many ways as well.

What are some ways we are like God?

God thinks, so do we. God loves, so do we. God has anger, so do we. God is a person, so are we. God has strength, so do we. God communicates, so do we. God works, so do we. God is creative, so are we.

What are some ways we are unlike God?

God is invisible and exists as spirit. We are visible and are made of matter and spirit. God is infinitely powerful and wise and loving and etc. We are finitely so. God is righteous. We are unrighteous. God never had a beginning, we did.

Are we more like God or unlike him?

We are more unlike God than like him.

Every human individual, male and female, is made in God's image.

What clues are there in vv. 26-27 to show why, when God made man in his image, he made him male and female?

V. 26 begins, "And God said". There is only one God who has spoken words of creation throughout the opening 26 verses of Genesis. But this one God says, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness..." (a plurality). Then in v. 27 man is made in "his own image" (singular). It appears that the one God exists as a plurality of persons in some sense. Therefore it is not surprising that "man", singular, is created as two persons, "male and female".

What conclusions can we draw from the fact that God created man male and female?

Being male reveals something about God that being female does not. Being female reveals something about God that being male does not. The relationship between male and female in a loving community reveals something about God that either one considered as an individual cannot reveal. The purpose of the human race will only be fulfilled as men and women live and work together in loving communities. Who is more necessary for displaying the greatness of God in the world, men or women? Neither. God's glory will not be fully seen without the full participation of both men and women.

God's image can only be fully seen in the partnership of men and women

In v. 28 we are told that God blessed them. To whom does the "them" refer? In v. 29 the "you" and the "yours" are plural in Hebrew. To whom do these plurals refer? What is significant about this?

The "them" and the "you" refer to male and female. God speaks to both and he blesses both and he gives food to both. In other words, God treats both man and woman as significant in his plan for the world. He is not more interested in one over the other. He does not prefer one to the other. He values both and enters into relationship with both.

What do you think of when you think of God "blessing" someone? See Genesis 12: 1-3 as an example.

Normally, when we think of God blessing a person we think of God promising to give something to or do something for a person or actually performing what he promised. For example in Genesis 12 God tells Abraham that he is going to bless him and then he says how. He is going to make his name great. He is going to make him into a great nation. He will make him a blessing so that all peoples on earth will be blessed through Abraham. He will bless those who bless Abraham and curse those who curse him.

What is the form of God's "blessing" as stated in v. 28?

The "blessing" God gives is in the form of commands. There are 5 commands: be fruitful, increase in number, fill the earth, subdue it, rule over the fish, etc.

through God's work of saving a remnant of people out of the whole mass of humanity. This work also cannot go forward without the participation of both men and women. He is going to fill the earth with men and women who worship him and he is going to do it through the faithful work of those men and women who now belong to him in his church.

What is meant by the blessing, "...subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground"?

Men and women together are delegated authority by God to make the created order serve us. The creation is given to us for our use and we are to work so that the creation is useful for the purpose of enabling us to be like God and to represent God. Again notice that the work of subduing and ruling over creation is given to men and women equally. The creation will not serve our purposes if we do not do it together, as partners. This does not mean that men and women are to do the same things, but that we are to share in the work equally. But again this is not simply a reference to ruling over the physical world but also refers to the authority of believers over the spiritual world and over their own sin. We are to subdue and rule over Satan, the evil that is in this world and our own sin so that we seek to establish God's rule on earth as it is in heaven.

What is significant about v. 29?

Here God promises to us everything we will need to obey the commands of v. 28. As John Calvin says in his commentary on Genesis, "...he promises a liberal abundance, which should leave nothing wanting to a sweet and pleasant life." Again, this is not only a reference to the supplying of our physical needs but also to every need we have to do his will, including all spiritual resources. This is the fountainhead of all God's promises to meet the needs of his people for the doing of his will. Again, do not miss that the promise of provision is to both male and female. Men and women share equally in the blessing and the gifting of God. Neither is more gifted for glorifying God than the other. Neither is superior or inferior.

How is it a blessing for man to be commanded by God to do these things?

We should see this in two ways. First, when we obey these commands we are fulfilling the purpose for which we were created and this will bring us a great sense of joy. This is what we are made for, to fill God's earth and care for it so that his glory is seen in and through us. This is like our job description. But second, it is a blessing because God enables what he commands. This is what it means to receive God's favor. He gives what he commands. For example, in Deut 10: 12-16 we are commanded to serve God and love him and obey him and to circumcise our hearts. Then in Deut. 30:6 we are told, "The Lord your God will circumcise your hearts...so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live." It's like Jesus' friend Lazarus who dies before Jesus can get to him. When Jesus finally gets to his home he's been dead for four days and is buried in a tomb. So Jesus goes out to his tomb and commands that the stone be rolled away from the entrance to the tomb. Then he commands, "Lazarus, come forth." And in one of the most comical scenes in the Bible, Lazarus comes out still wrapped in burial clothes. Let me ask you a question. How can a dead man obey the command to come out of the tomb? He can't unless the command contains the ability to obey it. That's how it is with all of God's commands and we see it right here at the beginning of the Bible. God's commands are a blessing because obeying them always brings us joy and because God enables what he commands.

What is meant by the blessing, "bear fruit, increase in numbers, fill the earth"? Compare this to Gen. 12:3b, Psalm 67:7, Jer. 33: 22, Matt. 28: 19, John 15:16, Col. 1:6 & Rev. 7:9.

The first and most obvious meaning is that God intends for the biological reproduction of human beings. This obviously requires the participation of both men and women. This gives the foundation for why the Bible calls children "blessings from God" (Psalm 127). They are a blessing because they are an evidence of God's grace. Children are the proof that God is enabling what he commands, being fruitful. However, God is not merely interested in quantity but in quality. He is commanding the filling of the earth with people who bear his image and rule his creation for his glory. After the fall (Gen. 3), this takes place

Why does God tell man that he is going to give the animals food in v. 30?

This is to teach man that he is not God. The animals can survive without man for God will take care of their needs. Man's relationship to the animal world is not that of God to creature but that of guardian and caretaker. Man is not the source of sustenance for animals, God is. Man is to rule over the animal world to conform it to serving him as he seeks to glorify God in all he does.

God's blessing is given to both men and women and requires both male and female participation.

Is there anything in this passage that has challenged how you have thought about being made in God's image as a man or as a woman?

What other applications can you think of in light of these realities?