

Biblical Men and Women - Applications

There is so much tied into the topic of who we are as men and women, made in the image of God. We must remember God's original intentions, and also grasp how sin has affected us and the world we live in.

Today my message will be a bit of a shotgun blast as I cover a few related topics to being biblical men and women rather than a single focus. Ultimately it comes down the redemption of Jesus making us into who he intends us to be to overcome the effects of the curse of sin.

While most of what I've shared applies equally to married or single people, I wanted to start out today addressing single people specifically.

Singles

There are in fact numerous single people in scripture. For example:

- Jesus
- Paul (who some speculate may have been a widower)
- Mary and Martha (probably) and maybe Lazarus
- Anna the prophetess at the temple

It is very easy in our culture to feel left out when you are a single person, especially in the church. But scripture is clear that being single isn't a curse, and is for some, a blessing.

1Cor 7:26 Because of the present crisis¹, I think it is best to remain as you are. 27 If you have a wife, do not seek to end the marriage. If you do not have a wife, do not seek to get married. 28 But if you do get married, it is not a sin. And if a young woman gets married, it is not a sin. However, those who get married at this time will have troubles, and I am trying to spare you those problems.

29 But let me say this, dear brothers and sisters: The time that remains is very short. So from now on, those with wives should not focus only on their marriage. 30 Those who weep or who rejoice or who buy things should not be absorbed by their weeping or their joy or their possessions. 31 Those who use the things of the world should not become attached to them. For this world as we know it will soon pass away.

32 I want you to be free from the concerns of this life. An unmarried man can spend his time doing the Lord's work and thinking how to please him. 33 But a married man has to think about his earthly responsibilities and how to please his wife. 34 His interests are divided. In the same way, a woman who is no longer married or has never been married

¹ Or pressures of life

can be devoted to the Lord and holy in body and in spirit. But a married woman has to think about her earthly responsibilities and how to please her husband. 35 I am saying this for your benefit, not to place restrictions on you. I want you to do whatever will help you serve the Lord best, with as few distractions as possible.

- There is always a present crisis
- Marriage and family is in some ways a distraction from the Lord's work
 - I imagine that Paul, with his life of constant travel, living day to day, confronted by persecution and peril had no way to be a husband and father. And he was completely sold out to taking the gospel where it had not been.
- Singleness should always be an option. It was never meant to be a restriction, such as had been the case for Catholic priests since the 12th century
- Jesus also spoke to this directly

Matt 19:3 Some Pharisees came and tried to trap him with this question: "Should a man be allowed to divorce his wife for just any reason?"

4 "Haven't you read the Scriptures?" Jesus replied. "They record that from the beginning 'God made them male and female.'" 5 And he said, "'This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.' 6 Since they are no longer two but one, let no one split apart what God has joined together."

7 "Then why did Moses say in the law that a man could give his wife a written notice of divorce and send her away?" they asked.

8 Jesus replied, "Moses permitted divorce only as a concession to your hard hearts, but it was not what God had originally intended. 9 And I tell you this, whoever divorces his wife and marries someone else commits adultery—unless his wife has been unfaithful."

10 Jesus' disciples then said to him, "If this is the case, it is better not to marry!"

11 "Not everyone can accept this statement," Jesus said. "Only those whom God helps. 12 Some are born as eunuchs, some have been made eunuchs by others, and some choose not to marry for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven. Let anyone accept this who can."

- The response of the disciples to the idea that no fault divorce was wrong is telling
- Those who God gifts with singleness will receive it with joy
- The same benefit is mentioned, for the sake of the kingdom.

If you are single, **seriously pray to the Lord to reveal to you whether this is your gift or not.** If you desire to find a spouse, go hard after God and trust that he will help bring to you someone suitable for you.

Single Parents

I know we also have many single parent families these days. It is a hard life for you. Being both father and mother to a family is beyond what any individual truly can do.

But we see God's heart in His promises to care in special ways for the widows and the fatherless. He reveals Himself as the husband of the single mom and the father of the fatherless:

Ps 146:9 The LORD watches over the sojourners; he upholds the widow and the fatherless, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

The church is part of God's help for support and to provide other role models for your children.

Ps 68:6 God places the lonely in families; he sets the prisoners free and gives them joy. But he makes the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land.

Brokenness

I want to spend the rest of today talking to how our brokenness affects the expression of the image of God. Humans are both beautiful and broken. Made in the image of God, but defiled with the sin of rebellion and all its effects. This includes those who have suffered abuse and pain as a result of the sin of others.

Whether you are married or single, whether you are a long-time believer or a newbie, or maybe even just considering following Jesus, we must understand we are in process. We acknowledge that we are sinners, separated from God and destined for hell. But Jesus came and took on human flesh so that he could be the perfect sacrifice to pay for our sin so we can be reconciled to him. He rose again from the dead proving he was God, and demonstrating his power over sin and death. When we choose to believe those witnesses and turn and start following Jesus, we are a new creation! But we still have brokenness. Broken ways of thinking, relating, feeling. We have to be sanctified by hearing the truth and obeying it, regardless of how we feel.

How do we love the broken?

We must affirm the truth as we present the good news and confront sin. The most unloving thing you can do for someone is affirm a lie. Now that doesn't mean we treat people poorly. We should always show respect and love toward even those who oppose us.

Sex is for marriage – we saw this above in Matt 19 where Jesus affirms God's good purpose in marriage, 1 man and 1 woman 4 life.

Key points here:

- Sex outside of marriage is sin, including homosexuality
- Marriage is a wonderful gift of God
- Divorce should not be flippant

Some want to reinvent the bible to say homosexuality isn't wrong. But in addition to Jesus clear teaching we find Paul affirming clearly

1 Tim 1:10 The law is for people who are sexually immoral, or who practice homosexuality, or are slave traders, liars, promise breakers, or who do anything else that contradicts the wholesome teaching 11 that comes from the glorious Good News entrusted to me by our blessed God.

- From the OT to the NT homosexuality is sin. It goes against God's way
- But the Good News is for all sinners! Amen!

And guess what, you don't need to become a heterosexual to get saved, you need to acknowledge Jesus as Lord and let him change you. You may be given to same-sex attraction today. Maybe you have chosen to follow Jesus but still have those feelings.

- You are not your feelings. You are broken human (like all of us) saved by the grace of God and being transformed from a sinner to a child of God!
- When you submit your will to Jesus, he can begin healing your brokenness
- It may take time to heal, don't give up.
- You may need help to heal – that's OK too. Talk to one of the elders or a trusted person who is mature in Jesus. We want to help you escape the trap of sin.

I struggled with pornography for years. It is a black, sticky sin that wants to suck you into self-destruction. But Jesus has freed me from that, and he can free you too from whatever sin entangles you right now.

Gender Issues

What if the normal ideas of what a Man or Woman is don't seem to fit you. Our culture often repeats the sinful and destructive lie of the enemy that you may have been born in the wrong body. This is a damnable lie straight from the pit of hell!

God made you. He doesn't make cosmic mistakes.

Who you are is not divorced from your physical existence. You are a living soul. A spirit with a body.

Not every man is alike, nor is every woman. I was always a small and svelte male. (Svelte is a nice way of saying scrawny.) I can be more sensitive and like conversation. When I was 17 years old, struggling with relationships with the opposite sex, feeling intimidated by all the guys who were much bigger and stronger than me, I would have been primed to believe the lie that perhaps I was female trapped in a male body.

But thank God I never heard such a lie until that recently became a thing. I remember the first time a young person came to me and said they might be the wrong “gender”. I just looked at them and said “No, God doesn’t make mistakes. He made you who you are and how you are. You were made on purpose, for a purpose.”

Parents, if your child comes to you speaking such things, boldly:

- 1) Love them unreservedly and with all the love God can give you, and
- 2) Gently reassure them that reality got it right. The body you have is the body you were meant to have.
- 3) Gently try to understand where these thoughts may come from
 - a. Is it just social contagion? Because others are doing it?
 - b. Is there trauma in their past which has led to feeling their sex is a problem?

We should fight back against a culture that lies. These lies destroy people continuously. No more silence on these kinds of things. Boys should stay out of girls’ sports. Now maybe before puberty co-ed soccer or whatever may be no big deal. But for high school or college? No way.

And we have got to be vocal about the permanent harm and damage being done to healthy children by the medical community. A sane and civilized nation should never allow children to damage their bodies because of a quasi-religious belief based on a rejection of reality.

Let’s talk now about

Marriages that aren’t what they should be

Remember that God wants to reverse the curse. Take us back to Genesis 2 where the husband and wife are one, “naked and unashamed” and are working together to subdue creation. Just like the scenarios we just talked about, **we generally bring brokenness into our marriages** that keep us from being a husband who loves his wife like Christ loves the church or being a woman who respects and submits to her husband. What do we do then?

- It works as each one submits to Christ’s redemptive work
- Draw a circle around yourself and work on everyone inside it
- Work on yourself first, even you only own 10% of the issue

- Address sin biblically

How does a husband learn to love like Christ loves the church?

I love how scripture also tells us that a man should love his wife like he loves his own body.

- A man knows what makes himself happy. He should know his wife equally well.
- Put the needs of your wife ahead of your own.
- Serve and sacrifice.

What if your wife isn't submissive? Keep doing your part.

How does a wife submit to and respect her husband?

- Recognize submission puts you and your family under God's watchful eye
- Always look for the positive and recognize the good
- Know the boundaries between human weakness and sin that should be confronted

What if your husband remains unloving? Keep doing your part.

I want to elaborate a bit on submission. It is truly a beautiful part of God's created order.

- While Christ was on earth he submitted his will to the Father
- The church is to submit ourselves to the will of Christ
- The church is led by elders and should submit to their leading
- The wife is to submit to the leadership of her husband
- Finally, kids submit to both parents

Another way of looking at submission is as an umbrella. When a wife obeys God's word, even if her husband doesn't, it keeps the wife under the umbrella of God's protection.

Confronting sin in your spouse

Again I want to emphasize that a wife should not submit to abuse, ever. And if either a wife or husband is involved in sin, the spouse should confront it.

Gal 6:1 Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself.

Note how this should be done:

- Based on godliness – separate personal preference from sinful behaviors
- Gently and humbly – anger separates, your desire must be for wholeness
- Prayerfully and carefully

If a spouse turns to willful, unrepentant sin, a spouse should follow biblical means for bringing correction to her spouse.

Matt 18:15 “If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back. 16 But if you are unsuccessful, take one or two others with you and go back again, so that everything you say may be confirmed by two or three witnesses. 17 If the person still refuses to listen, take your case to the church. Then if he or she won’t accept the church’s decision, treat that person as a pagan or a corrupt tax collector.

Jerry Csaki recently preached on Matthew 18 and I would recommend you go back and listen to that to get a fuller picture of how to do that. But the point is this. Often in marriage we don’t act biblically. We accept ungodly ways in ourselves and may excuse or tolerate ungodly ways in our spouses. Of course there is human frailty that we should have grace for. Not everything is worth fighting over. May God grant us wisdom to know the difference.

Conclusion

As I wrap up this series today let me recap what we’ve talked about.

Men and women are created to be joint-heirs with Christ, co-rulers over creation, co-laborers in the kingdom, with men taking the lead and women coming working alongside.

Biblical masculinity is the power to do good. It starts with a proper response to God; it is fulfilled through rightly inspired action. Men need to be strong and loving.

Biblical femininity is the power to nurture life. It is birthed out of a loving response to God, and functions in harmony with biblical male leadership. When it flows in God’s proper order it will cause the home, the church and the world to thrive.

The confusion and problems we experience such as same-sex attraction, gender dysphoria, and marriage difficulties comes down to broken patterns of thinking and living due to the effects of sin. It may be past trauma, how we were raised, our own choices to believe lies. But regardless of the reasons, the solution is the same.

Obedience to Christ and his word. As we yield to the Word of God in our lives we reverse the curse of sin for us and those around us. You may think I am oversimplifying things, but I am not saying it is easy – it is extremely hard as it comes at the cost of your whole heart and life. But the Holy Spirit can change you and your situation from death to life as you yield your heart to him. Learn from his word, and obey it day by day.