

# God's Great Design - Purpose Revisited

REVIEW: As you all know we have been working through God's great design for humanity over the last several weeks. In particular, we have been wrestling with the questions, "What does it mean to be a man?" and, "What does it mean to be a woman?" And even, "What does it mean that we are made in God's image."

- I. We looked at God being our Creator, and the fact that because He is the Creator, He knows better how this life should operate
- II. We looked at the fact that we are made in the image of God
  - A. We hold a special place in creation
    1. Did you hear of the stories about two dogs during the ebola scare in the fall
      - a) One dog in Spain was put down - and Spain was near rioting
      - b) One dog in Texas was just quarantined and people raised nearly a million dollars to help with this pup's loneliness
      - c) Serious misunderstanding in our society of the image of God and why that makes us special
    - B. Don't get me wrong - because we were given the privileged position over creation, we have an obligation to protect animals and protect all life
  - III. We looked at man's purpose
    - A. Men are given the role of headship - working to establish order for mankind to flourish
      1. Where men give this responsibility up, you can literally watch society break down
        - a) First the family, then the neighborhood, then the nation
        - b) There have been millions of dollars poured into proving that God was right all along
      2. This headship should be practiced in sacrificial love
        - a) He should be a giver, not a taker (which is great dating advice for the young ladies here - the boy you date should be a giver, not a taker - if he is after sex, he is not a giver, he is taking)
      3. Headship means that men set the spiritual climate
        - a) And by not setting a spiritual climate - you are setting a spiritual climate
        - b) If you are thinking, "I'm not good at this - I feel incompetent" - that doesn't let you off the hook
          - (1) Try telling your boss that
          - (2) You either get competent or pack your bags
        - c) So, if this is weird for you, here is what I suggest
          - (1) Find a family devotional book - maybe with your wife
          - (2) Use that book with your family

# God's Great Design - Purpose Revisited

- (a) And then expect frustration - if you have little kids, they will likely be all over the map
  - (b) They will not be sitting there as perfect angels saying, "Yes, Father. Train me in your Jedi ways."
  - (c) But listen, more gets in than you think - they really do hear more than we think
- (3) If you don't know how to pray for your wife - ask her - then more importantly, pray on the spot for what she asked for - the more you do it, the more natural it will become

IV. We looked at two areas that trip men up

- A. Selfish passivity
- B. And selfish aggression

V. Last week we looked at how the gospel readies us for the task God has called us too

TRAN: Today we turn our attention to the ladies. So you have a man preaching on what it means to be a woman. What could go wrong here?

So we will be making our way through many of the same texts to look at the ladies now. So turn to Genesis 2:18

I. God's design was for there to be two complimentary people

A. Up to this point God has said, "It is good. It is good. It is good."

- 1. So now we see man in this perfect little garden, with the work he was commanded to do - just a perfect setting
- 2. And God says, something is still not ideal here - it's not good for the man to be alone - so God makes Him a partner suitable for him
  - a) There were all kinds of animals that could help Adam in his work in the garden - ox, horses, elephants
  - b) But none of those animals will help Adam exercise authority over creation
  - c) They cannot help Adam in establishing order for human flourishing

B. So here is the point, the woman becomes partner with Adam in all things to help him establish the order for human flourishing

- 1. That means women are needed and necessary
- 2. They are NOT an after thought of God

C. The other thing that is presented and established here is community

- 1. Isolation is not the norm
- 2. We need each other - as husband and wife - as male and female
  - a) Would this mean that singleness is sinful because you are away from the norm God is establishing

# God's Great Design - Purpose Revisited

- b) Not at all - in fact Paul says that it gives more time to focus on God and God's work in this world
  - (1) So while children were the blessing in the OT
  - (2) Paul is saying, disciples are the blessing in the NT - especially for those who are single or without children
- D. So some practical implications are clear
  - 1. If you are single - get in the game - influence someone for Christ
  - 2. It has been my privilege to watch some of our older students influence some of the younger ones
    - a) When I hear from Nadia how much she admires the older girls in the group and has grown from their influence
    - b) Or Lindon talking about some of the older guys influencing him
    - c) Or watch Isabelle take on teaching the pre-school kids for Kidz 4 Christ
  - 3. Get in the game - find someone to influence for the glory of God
  - 4. And whatever you do, do not fall victim to the lie of our culture that if you are single, you are somehow less than what God desires
    - a) It is fine, and even biblical to desire a spouse
    - b) But don't let that desire sideline you from being a beast for Jesus
- II. In this passage as a whole, I want to point out three things that need to be understood to get a better handle on this passage
  - A. First, there is one Eve created for one Adam
    - 1. Seems like a no-brainer but think about the culture that this was written into (not the time of Adam and Eve, but the time of Moses)
    - 2. The more wives you had the wealthier your were
    - 3. So this would be a big shift in thinking
  - B. Second, and you may have heard this before, but Eve was taken from Adam's side
    - 1. The connotation is intimacy
    - 2. She is not taken from his back, or feet, or head, but from his side
  - C. Third, it would have been scandalous for a man to leave his family and cling to his wife
    - 1. Add a wife to the family, sure
    - 2. But leave mama? Never!
- III. Now we come to the big phrase in the passage - "a helper suitable for him"
  - A. Let's start with the word "helper"
    - 1. There are some words that you can only understand by context - and this word from Hebrew, "ezer" is one of those words
      - a) For example: the word fan

# God's Great Design - Purpose Revisited

- b) The word fan can mean an electronic device with rotating blades to stir the air
  - c) It can also refer to a handheld object with a semi-circular shape
  - d) Or a device for winnowing grain
  - e) Or, someone that is particularly excited by a person, or team
    - (1) That is just the nouns
    - (2) We haven't gotten to the verbs
  - f) So if I say that \_\_\_\_\_ is a really big fan of One Direction, you don't picture them as an electronic device that rotates with pictures of the band members on it
    - (1) The context determines the meaning
    - (2) And that is what is happening here
2. So we will get to the context in a minute of the word, but the big debate in this passage is, do women as helpers have a subordinate role to the man in human flourishing?
- a) Women are equal in dignity, worth, and importance - there is no debate about that
  - b) We also said that women do not have to be subordinate to all men
    - (1) I didn't have the right to tell my sister to clean my room when I was growing up because I am a man
    - (2) I don't have the right to make demands about life to women in my life because I am a man
3. So back to our word, "ezer"
- a) When it is used, it is most often used of how God helps man
    - (1) Exodus 18:4
    - (2) Deuteronomy 33:7
    - (3) Psalm 33:20
  - b) So if God is called helper (using the same word as the one referring to women) - that brings honor to the position of helper
    - (1) Helper cannot be inferior to man - so women are not inferior
    - (2) When you think about this, the helper is providing something the one being helped needs
      - (a) The one being helped cannot do it on their own
      - (b) So the helper is aiding the one being helped to accomplish the task
      - (c) The one being helped has been tasked with the primary responsibility, and the helper is doing just that - helping
- B. Second is the phrase "suitable for him"
- 1. Other versions say "fit for him"
  - 2. To fit, would imply to match up, or complement him

# God's Great Design - Purpose Revisited

- a) So there is no competition involved
  - b) The weaknesses of one are strengthened by the other and the strengths are made stronger
  - c) It's what is known as complementarianism - men being men, as we have described, and women being women
    - (1) When we work with this system, humans flourish
    - (2) When we fight against the system, things get bad
- IV. Complementarianism - how might life look if women helped the man in his God given roles
- A. We talked about men having headship and exercising that in the home, in the church and in the community
    - 1. But what would this look like in real life?
  - B. If women helped (in the biblical sense) in the home
    - 1. We will not turn there but Ephesians 5 talks about "mutual submission" and husbands loving their wives before it ever gets to "wives submit to your husbands"
    - 2. What it is talking about is men exercising headship in sacrificial love
      - a) You practice deference, you interact, you value your wife's gifts, her intelligence, you seek out her help in matters, her insights
      - b) None of this, "This is what we are doing woman!"
        - (1) That's bullying - not headship
        - (2) Headship is a respect and mutual submission - a give and take, an interest in her views and opinions
    - 3. Turn to Titus 2:2-8
      - a) So here is what is going on here - women are plugged into the discipleship in the home
        - (1) They help to set the spiritual climate along with their husbands
        - (2) They encourage their husbands to get in the battle for the souls of their children
          - (a) Encourage opening God's Word with the kids
          - (b) Encourage family devotions
        - (3) They, along with their husbands seek out their child's heart
      - b) The last thing is being kind and submissive to their husbands
        - (1) God has given women MASSIVE amounts of power over their husband's hearts and souls
          - (a) I learned a long time ago to have thick skin in ministry - either you learn how to go to sleep at night after being cussed out by a disgruntled church member or you lose a lot of sleep

# God's Great Design - Purpose Revisited

- (b) Not being married, their is not quite the same equivalent here, but there have been special people that I have let into my life, that when they say something, it can decimate me
  - i) They know my strengths and weakness
  - ii) And they can lay waste to my heart with a single sentence
- (2) Wives, God has handed that power to you
  - (a) You know your husband's strengths and his weakness
  - (b) Be a champion for his strengths - be kind
    - i) Don't be an expert on his shortcomings
    - ii) There is a time and place to deal with those
      - (1) But the time is not everyday
      - (2) And the place is not where he will feel emasculated
  - (c) When he is doing well, applaud
    - i) Don't follow him around with all his weakness
    - ii) We will get into that next week I think
- c) The Bible gives us a promise here
  - (1) Where we do these things - men are committed to biblical headship, and women are committed to being a support to their husbands in these ways
  - (2) The Bible says that our opponents will have nothing bad to say about us
  - (3) So, if a man is loving sacrificially, his wife knows she is loved
    - (a) She knows that he is into her
    - (b) She knows that no other woman is in his radar
    - (c) She knows that he wants her to exercise her gifts
  - (4) When that happens, this idea that "You need to liberate from your man" is ridiculous
    - (a) That is hard work men - if we put the same level of effort into our wives as we do sports teams, or cars, or fill in the blank
    - (b) People would have nothing bad to say against you
  - (5) We are NOT talking about the archaic "Women must submit!" and men can get away with being bullies
    - (a) But when we live this out the way God intended
    - (b) The world's got nothing
      - i) In fact, they may just envy you
- 4. Now, for you ladies, if all you have been around are jerks and idiot men, I can see why talking submission would make you nervous
  - a) Please do not take "that guy" and make him the norm for all guys
  - b) This is why I plead with the church, and plead with the kids in the YG - be patient for a godly man, for a godly woman

# God's Great Design - Purpose Revisited

- (1) ILLUSTRATION: Todd and Hillary Baden
  - (2) And allow me to throw this in for you all to hear - I will not perform a wedding for a spiritually mixed couple
  - (3) This could mean a couple that comes and says, "Well I'm a Christian, but my fiancée is a hindu, but we have found ways to make it work."
    - (a) I will not be bringing those two together in marriage
  - (4) More likely the scenario will be one of my former kids that has not listened to me about waiting for a godly fiancée and wants me to perform their wedding
    - (a) I will have to decline - and that will come as quite a shock to some of you
    - (b) But Scripture is clear about this that we do not marry unbelievers - people that are spiritually not on the same page as us
    - (c) And because by performing the marriage I am helping them enter into that kind of relationship, that is a violation of my conscience before God
- C. That was complementarianism in the home - let's turn our attention to the church
1. Women played a significant role in the founding of the church in Scripture, and they still have significant roles in church today
    - a) In Acts 8, Saul is dragging both men and women to prison, and the church is being scattered
      - (1) Because both men and women are being persecuted
      - (2) It stands to reason that women were a part of that scattering that resulted in the preaching of the gospel
    - b) Older women were to teach younger women
    - c) Priscilla helped Aquilla teach Paul - and she was even listed first
    - d) Phillip had four daughters that prophesied
  2. Women still have a significant role to play in the church today
    - a) Use your gifts ladies
    - b) Teach others, help others to know God better and better
    - c) Do not be afraid to use the gifts and talents God has given you for His glory
      - (1) The only boundary God has set up is not to do it in a way that usurps the authority God gave to men
      - (2) And we will get to that eventually in this series of series
  3. Ladies, if you really get serious about chasing after God
    - a) If you are growing in your theological knowledge

# God's Great Design - Purpose Revisited

- b) You may come across some men that are intimidated by your depth of faith, or your intelligence, or your understanding of God's Word
- c) One encouragement: don't dumb yourself down to get a man
  - (1) He should revel in the fact that God has gifted you with an agile mind
  - (2) He should be challenged to grow with you - inspired to read and grow and understand all the more about his faith too
  - (3) But please don't make yourself stupid to get a man
    - (a) Make him step up to your level
    - (b) Don't sink to his
  - (4) When you do that, it is no longer about God's glory, but about that guy's ego
- 4. I'll be honest, I look forward to a strong woman
  - a) I need a strong woman - because I am a strong man
  - b) I need that woman that can, lovingly, and respectfully stand toe to toe with me and put me back in my place when I act like an idiot
- V. Imagine what God would do with our community if men and women were willing to fulfill these roles
  - A. If men loved sacrificially as a part of headship
    - 1. If men set the spiritual climate in their homes
      - a) And the wives were right along side of them
      - b) Encouraging, and loving their kids, pushing them toward Christ
    - 2. If men exercised headship in the church
      - a) And women, in that same church, felt free to share and exercise the gifts God has given them
      - b) Women feel free to know, and grow in the Lord - to study theology, and know their Bibles well - to teach and to be little beasts for Jesus
  - B. Imagine if women and men understood that the role of helper is not a weak role but a strong role
    - 1. That the women in our lives are taking on a role that God takes on for us
  - C. What if all of us understood that men and women were meant to complement one another
    - 1. Rather than compete with each other
    - 2. We recognize our strengths, and our weakness, and cherish the ways God has made our partner strong where we are not
      - a) How God has made us strong to help our partner
      - b) And how together, we can do amazing things for the gospel and for God's glory