



## God and sex

by Bernard Gabbott

Our world has undergone some significant changes over the last decade when it comes to how we understand sex, gender, our identity, and the way we relate. In this sense, we won't cover all those bases in this series, but we do want to deal with the basics that God sets out in his word when it comes to human identity and sex. To many of us this might seem 'old news'- after all, nothing that has happened in our world has changed our opinion of what God says. For many of us, this might be striking news—that God has a design, that his design reflects his nature, and that this design actually works for the good of those who bear his image. Moreover, there is another layer to this as we seek to lay this design out clearly to the world around us, respond with grace as we deal with those who might think differently, and extend the goodness of Jesus to all who need to hear it.

### **Memory verse:**

Then God said,

"Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.

They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky,  
the animals, all the earth,

and the creatures that crawl on the earth."

So God created man in His own image;

He created him in the image of God;

He created them male and female.

***Genesis 1:26-27***

## Study 1: Man and woman Genesis 1:26-2:3; 2:8-25

### Comprehend

1. Read the passages.
2. Who makes humans? And how does he make them? (1:26-27)
3. What is the command and provision given to humans? (1:28-30)

What is the assessment of this creation? (1:31)

4. Genesis 2 gives another angle on this creation. What does God create and who does God place there? (2:15)
5. What is the command and provision given? (2:16-17)
6. What is the assessment of this situation? (2:18)

What is the realization? (2:19-20)

7. What does God do? (2:21-22)
8. What is the wonderful outcome? (2:23-25)

### Consider

1. Genesis 1 and 2 is clear the gender and biology are linked physically in creation. What are the two genders created?

In the creation account, what is so important about this gender-biology bipolarity—what/who does it reflect?

2. In the context of creation, how do the man and woman work together?
3. What is important to recognize about the value of each gender, and the roles that are different?
4. How is the answer you gave in 1b reflected in Genesis 2:23-25?

### **Contact**

1. What is different about this account of biology and gender when compared to the narrative in our world?
2. What is important about this account of biology and gender being maintained in this world?
3. What might we—and our world—find confronting about this account?
4. How might this account affect the way we treat people who think differently to us on this issue?

## **Study 2: Marriage**

### **Genesis 2:8-25; Ephesians 5:21-33; 1 Cor.7:1-9**

#### **Comprehend**

1. Read the passages.
2. When God creates man and woman, how are they to 'come together'? (Gen.2:23-25)
3. Looking back at Genesis 1:26-28, what does marriage enable to happen?
4. Scanning through Ephesians 5, what is marriage meant to be a picture of?

What role does gender difference (remembering from Study 1, that gender and biology are inextricably linked) play in this marriage design?

5. In 1 Corinthians 7, what good role does marriage play?

What might have been revolutionary in this description of marriage? (e.g. vs.3-4)

#### **Consider**

1. What definition of marriage does the word of God lay out? (see also Matthew 19)
2. What is so important about this design, in this world, as God has made it?

3. What might be lost in this world if this design for marriage is compromised?

### **Contact**

1. What do you find confronting, comforting, puzzling, encouraging about this design of marriage?
2. Why do you think this design for marriage is so challenged in our world, today?
3. How might we treat/relate to those who might have a very different view of marriage to this design?

## **Study 3: Singleness** **Matthew 19:1-12**

### **Comprehend**

1. Read the passage.
2. Jesus is asked a question—where does he go for his answer? (vs.4-5)
3. The disciples find Jesus' teaching hard, they ask a question, and Jesus answers in a unique way—what does he say? (vs.11-12)
3. How does this help us understand Jesus' view of singleness? How might 1 Corinthians 7:29-35 help elaborate on this?

### **Consider**

1. It isn't easy, but how would you summarise what these passages help us understand about God's view on singleness?
2. How might a passage like Matthew 19:29 or Mark 10:29 help us understand the role of the household of God in relation to singleness?
3. What would you say to these statements:
  - 'God's design is for everyone to marry'
  - 'A single person is a person on the way to marriage'
  - 'God's design for disciples is not marriage but godliness'

**Contact**

1. Think about how we often speak to single people... how might we not be helpful in what we say?

Think about how we care for single people—how might we do better?

2. Why might a high view of singleness (and godliness) be a helpful design for walking with brothers and sisters who are dealing with all sorts of sexual temptation?

## Study 4: Children

**Genesis 1:26-28; Psalm 127; Deuteronomy 6: 4-9 ; Ephesians 6:1-4**

### Comprehend

1. Read the passages.
2. In Psalm 127, what is God's view of children? Why?
3. In Deuteronomy 6, what (and where and by whom) are children to learn?
4. In Ephesians 6, how are children to be, and how are children to learn about the things of God?
5. In letters like Colossians (3:20) and Ephesians (6:1-4) (and even in Matthew 18), what do we learn about the place of children within God's mob?

### Consider

1. How might Psalm 127 confront and confirm our view of children?
2. How is this central to our understanding of God's design? (cf. Gen.1)
3. What do Deuteronomy 6 and Ephesians 6 encourage parents and children in?
4. How might Jesus' view of the 'little ones' influence our's?



**Contact**

1. What might we have to change in our view of children, in light of God's word?
2. How might God's high view of children confront that of our world—when it puts children on a pedestal, when it disregards or belittles children, when it opposes children?