

## **Anthropology 101: What does the Bible really teach about men and women?**

*Selected verses*

***In the opening chapters of Holy Scripture, we learn that in the beginning, on the sixth day of creation, God created mankind. Humanity began with just two people, a man and a woman. The male, Adam, was created first. Then, God declared that the man needed a companion. It was not good for him to be alone. Thus, God made him a helper, comparable to, yet different than, him. She was to be called woman. The prophet Moses further explains how God created the first woman, Eve, ordaining her to be man's helper:***

Genesis 2:18-23: ““And the LORD God said, "*It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.*" Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought *them* to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that *was* its name. So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him. And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said: "*This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man.*"”

**Thus, God created mankind in two genders—male and female.**

In this first account of men and women in Scripture, we learn that God gave males an innate desire for female companionship. Males are incomplete without females. While the New Testament teaches that God grants some males and females a special gift of celibacy, by nature the male is endowed with a desire for female companionship, and the female was given a desire for the male.

***God declared that He made mankind in His image and likeness:***

Genesis 1:26-27: “Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”

Genesis 5:1-2: “This is the book of the genealogy of Adam. In the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female, and blessed them and called them Mankind in the day they were created.”

***God instituted marriage between one man and one woman:***

Genesis 2:22-25: “Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said: "*This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of*

Man." Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed."

Matthew 19:4-6: Jesus told the Pharisees, "Have you not read that He who made *them* at the beginning 'made them male and female,' "and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? "So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

***What is the Bible's take on abstinence pledges and the modern trend of delaying marriage to pursue college degrees, careers, and financial security, despite the fact that the vast majority of young people lack the gift of celibacy?***

1 Corinthians 7:2, 9: "Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. . . . if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn *with passion*."

1 Timothy 4:1, 3: "Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons . . . forbidding to marry . . . ."

***What does God say about the relationship between men and women? Are they dependent on each other or independent of one another?***

1 Corinthians 11:11-12: "Nevertheless, neither *is* man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord. For as woman *came* from man, even so man also *comes* through woman; but all things are from God."

***What does God say in His Word about the relationship between the sexes?***

Genesis 3:16: "To the woman He [God] said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire *shall be* for your husband, And he shall rule over you."

The female was created to desire the male, for she "was taken out of man" (Genesis 2:23). The wife benefits from her husband's rule, as he acts as her protector.

1 Corinthians 11:3: "But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, **the head of woman *is* man**, and the head of Christ *is* God" (emphasis added).

1 Corinthians 11:7 "For a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head, since he is the image and glory of God; **but woman *is* the glory of man**." (emphasis added)

1 Corinthians 11:8-9: "For man is not from woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man."

***God's Word sets forth diverse roles for husbands and wives, which help us to better understand God's will for males and females.***

### **What are God's instructions to husbands?**

Ephesians 5:23, 25-28, 33: "For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. . . . Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. . . . Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects *her* husband."

Colossians 3:19: "Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them."

1 Peter 3:7: "Husbands, likewise, dwell with *them* with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as *being* heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered."

Godly men are to be "the husband of one wife" (1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:6).

1 Corinthians 7:3-5: "Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband *does*. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife *does*. Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control."

### **What are God's instructions to wives?**

Ephesians 5:22-24: "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in everything."

Ephesians 5:33b: "let the wife see that she respects *her* husband."

1 Peter 3:1-6: "Wives, likewise, *be* submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct *accompanied* by fear. Do not let your adornment be *merely* outward -- arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on *fine* apparel--rather *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible *beauty* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror." (NKJ)

1 Peter 3:1-2: "In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any *of them* are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior." (NAS)

Titus 2:4-5: “Admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.”

***Do males and females differ from each other—physically, mentally, and/or spiritually? Here is what God’s Word says:***

1 Peter 3:7: “Husbands, likewise, dwell with *them* with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to **the weaker vessel**, and as *being* heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.” (emphasis added)

1 Timothy 2:13-15: “For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And **Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression**. Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.” (emphasis added)

1 Corinthians 11:3: “But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, **the head of woman is man**, and the head of Christ *is* God.” (emphasis added)

***At the same time, there is no difference between males and females in regard to salvation and the eternal inheritance awaiting all God’s people:***

Galatians 3:27-29: “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, **there is neither male nor female**; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you *are* Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” (emphasis added)

1 Peter 3:7: “Husbands, likewise, dwell with *them* with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as *being heirs together of the grace of life*, that your prayers may not be hindered.” (emphasis added)

1 Peter 1:3-5: “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Ephesians 1:3-12: “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth -- in Him. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.”

Ephesians 2:1-10: “And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

***One way in which God says that men and women are to be distinguished is by the way in which they dress.***

Deuteronomy 22:5: “A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all who do so *are* an abomination to the LORD your God” (NKJ). “A woman must not wear men's clothing, nor a man wear women's clothing, for the LORD your God detests anyone who does this” (NIV).

1 Timothy 2:9-10: “Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments; but rather by means of good works, as is proper for women making a claim to godliness” (NAS).

1 Peter 3:3-4: “Do not let your adornment be *merely* outward -- arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on *fine* apparel--rather *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible *beauty* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.”

***God says that men and women are further distinguished by their hairstyles:***

1 Corinthians 11:14-15: “Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him? But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for *her* hair is given to her for a covering.”

1 Corinthians 11:6: “For if a woman does not cover her head, let her also have her hair cut off; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, let her cover her head” (NAS).

***Furthermore, God has ordained that females should be distinguished from males by the wearing of a headcovering in Christian worship:***

1 Corinthians 11:1-16: "Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ. Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered *them* to you. But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman *is* man, and the head of Christ *is* God. Every man praying or prophesying, having *his* head covered, dishonors his head. But every woman who prays or prophesies with *her* head uncovered dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved. For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. For man is not from woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man. For this reason the woman ought to have a *symbol of authority* on *her* head, because of the angels. Nevertheless, neither *is* man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord. For as woman *came* from man, even so man also *comes* through woman; but all things are from God. Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him? But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for *her* hair is given to her for a covering. But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor *do* the churches of God."

***What does the Bible says about women teaching and leading in the Church of Christ? Who does God will to choose who should or should not be elders and deacons in Christ's Church? God's Word reveals God's will for men and women in His Church:***

1 Timothy 2:11-15: God says, "Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control."

1 Corinthians 11:33-37, 40: "For God is not *the author* of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints. Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but *they are* to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful [or, disgraceful] for women to speak in church. Or did the word of God come *originally* from you? Or *was it* you only that it reached? If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that **the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord [Jesus Christ]**. . . . Let all things be done decently and in order." (emphasis added)

God instructs older women to be "teachers of good things." He then instructs them what they are to teach: "that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed" (Titus 2:4-5, cf. Titus 2:3).

Note that rebellion against God's commandments for His children brings blasphemy or great dishonor upon the word of God. Is blasphemy a small matter in God's eyes? Obedience to God's revealed will for His sons and daughters is a serious matter.

***Did God ordain males and/or females to be pastors and elders in Christian churches?***

1 Timothy 3:1-7: "This *is* a faithful saying: If **a man** desires the position of a bishop, **he** desires a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, **the husband of one wife**, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; one who rules **his** own house well, having **his** children in submission with all reverence (for if **a man** does not know how to rule **his** own house, how will **he** take care of the church of God?); not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride **he** fall into the *same* condemnation as the devil. Moreover **he** must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest **he** fall into reproach and the snare of the devil." (emphasis added)

Titus 1:5-9: "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you -- if **a man** is blameless, **the husband of one wife**, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination. For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word as **he** has been taught, that **he** may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict." (emphasis added)

***Did God ordain males and/or females to be deacons in Christian churches?***

Acts 6:2-4: "Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you **seven men** of *good* reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."" (emphasis added)

1 Timothy 3:8-13: "Likewise deacons *must be* reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being *found* blameless. Likewise **their wives** *must be* reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. **Let deacons be the husbands of one wife**, ruling *their* children and their own houses well. For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." (emphasis added)

***According to the prophet Isaiah, when God is judging a people, who does God send to lead them and to rule them?***

Isaiah 3:10-15: "Say to the righteous that *it shall be well with them*, For they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe to the wicked! *It shall be ill with him*, For the reward of his hands shall be given him. **As for My people, children are their oppressors, And women rule over them.** O My people! Those who lead you cause *you* to err, And destroy the way of your paths." The LORD stands up to plead, And stands to judge the

people. The LORD will enter into judgment With the elders of His people And His princes: "For you have eaten up the vineyard; The plunder of the poor *is* in your houses. What do you mean by crushing My people And grinding the faces of the poor?" Says the Lord GOD of hosts" (emphasis added).

***What happens when a society rejects God's plan for men and women?***

In Romans, chapter 1, the apostle Paul explains that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness" (1:18). When a society denies their Creator and turns to the worship of man, humanism, evolution, worldly wisdom, idolatry, and immorality (1:19-23), God gives them "up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves" (1:24). In denying "the truth of God" (Biblical theology and God's Word) and embracing the falsehood of human wisdom, such a society worships and serves the creature (i.e., themselves, idols, heartthrobs, goddesses, animals, nature and the environment) rather than the Creator (1:25).

Romans 1:24-25: "Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen."

Given over to "uncleanness," sexually transmitted diseases proliferate. Bodies are dishonored through nudity and "body art" (such as the pagan rites of tattooing skin and multiplying body piercings, which denies the beauty of the human body as God created it—cf. Leviticus 19:28). Having rejected the true beauty of God and His Creation, man rejects the beauty of the human body, as the masterpiece of God's creation, and is willing to spare no expense to alter and deface it. Rejecting God's word, men and women may also reject the God-given marks of masculinity and femininity.

**God says in Romans 1:26-32:**

"For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature." (26)

"Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due." (27)

"And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; *they are* whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them." (28-32)

***Is what the Bible really teaches about men and women still relevant in modern times? Why does it matter whether we believe and obey God's word on this subject?***



God warns in the last chapter of Holy Scripture, **Revelation, chapter 22**, that embracing and obeying God's commandments is a matter of eternal life or death.

Jesus declares, "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward *is* with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the* Beginning and *the* End, the First and the Last." Blessed *are* those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside *are* dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie." (Revelation 22:12-17)

"I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star." And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely."

Jesus warns us to beware of those who teach that God's word changes with the times or that His Word was only for a primitive, unenlightened culture. The Bible concludes with a strong warning against listening to those who add to or take away from God's revealed Word in Holy Scripture:

"For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book. He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen." (Revelation 22:18-21)