

Title: Complementarity – God’s Wonderful Design

GCF’S THEOLOGICAL DISTINCTIVES (7 of them)

1. We are committed to the authority and sufficiency of scripture
2. We are committed to gospel centrality
3. We are committed to reformed theology
4. We are committed to complementarity

Pray:

Illustration:

“My introduction to Psalm 113 was when I sang it along with others in corporate worship. It was 21 years ago, and I was sporting a butch haircut and extra piercings in my right ear. I stood in a pew in the Syracuse Reformed Presbyterian Church awkwardly seeking a God that I secretly hoped would accept me as I was. Floy Smith, the pastor’s wife, stood at my side. Floy, a woman who could bridge worlds for me, brushed me with her shoulder before we started to sing. “God is making you His beautiful trophy, my dear,” she whispered in my ear, the one with the extra piercings. Pastor Ken Smith told us to open our Psalters to Psalm 113A in *The Book of Psalms for Singing*.

I jumped in with mouth open wide.

But before I realized what was coming out of my mouth, I sang the last lines of the psalm and implicated myself into what I believed then was hateful patriarchy and institutionalized misogyny.

Like many things that have caught me in mid-leap, this psalm started out on what I perceived to be safe ground. A song of praise to a God who has to stoop to examine his creation: He lowers himself to examine the stars, the moon, and the sun. He makes no bones about his authority over creation, and then he makes dead bones live. He tells the mountains to stand, and they obey without backtalk. He even bends low enough to build up men and women, giving love to the loveless, dignity to the depraved, and family to the refugee. But the crescendo brought praise to a halt for me. I choked mid-verse:

He the childless woman takes
and a joyful mother makes;
Keeping house she finds reward.
Praise Jehovah; praise the Lord!

That psalm stuck with me like a bad toothache. Its outdated embrace of patriarchy was unthinkable! I had warred against patriarchy for decades. As the daughter of a feminist, I took up my destiny with pride. Even more than my lesbian identity, my feminist identity grounded me in everything that I valued.

The whole verse was unthinkable. “Keeping house she finds reward”! Absurd! How could anyone find reward in keeping house (aspiring to be a stay-at-home mother and wife)? Immediately, I jumped to the hope that this was just a bad translation or a vivid literary metaphor—one that needed some serious reining in. And so I asked the pastor’s wife. And then I asked the elders’ wives. And then I asked the other women in the church.

No one in my church apologized for this verse, and no one dismissed it as an over-extending metaphor.

Instead, Floy and the other women I asked told me that this line was both metaphor and material. It spoke of real women reflecting their relationship to Jesus by their resemblance to Jesus. And it gave a picture of God’s

compassion on the solitary. My sisters reminded me that Scripture interprets Scripture. The sense and purpose and beauty of this verse had to be read in the context of Genesis 1:27 and Genesis 3:16.”¹

Transition: When I first understood the biblical call to repent and trust in Jesus, I wanted nothing to do with it. I wanted to run my own life. However, when I submitted to King Jesus, I found a glorious freedom from which I have never once looked back.

In the same way, many of us are tempted to balk at this teaching. But if you do you will miss the beauty of God’s wonderful design.

Three Points: Definition / Biblical Support / Application

I. Definition:

We are committed to complementarity. We believe it was God’s glorious plan to create men and women in His image, giving them equal dignity and value in His sight, while appointing differing and complementary roles for them within the home and the church (Genesis 1:26–28; Ephesians 5:22–33; 1 Timothy 2:8–15; Gal. 3:28–29). Because these roles give different expressions to God’s image in humanity, they should be valued and pursued in joy and faith. As the redeemed community of God, the church has a unique opportunity and responsibility to celebrate this complementarity, to contend for it against cultural hostility, and to protect it from sinful distortions.² Compliment – flattering words or acts) (Complement – completion)

This is the view the church has taken through all of church history. That said, it has been severely challenged in the last few decades. In the mid 1970s a movement coined Egalitarianism arose and has gained ground ever since.

Egalitarianism – equal in dignity and value AND have no distinction in roles

Complementarity – equal in dignity and value BUT have different and complementary roles

While this is not a salvation issue, much is at stake. Gender equality and roles goes to the very heart of who God is Himself.

Some reject the idea as undesirable.

Others believe it is true but see it as embarrassing or less than ideal.

Still others see this as God’s beautiful design and worthy of celebration.

II. Biblical Support:

(Gen 1:26-28) ²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

A. The Equality:

Our gender as male & female is at the core of who we are as “image of God”. Image of God – together not individually. Something about God creating a man and a woman expresses who He is more than just if He had created a man by himself or created a woman by herself. “together – image of God”

Gal 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

¹ 9 Marks article: How Psalm 113 Changed My Life – 12.10.2019

² For a fuller statement of these matters, please see the Danvers statement

It's not better or worse to be a man / it is not better or worse to be a woman.

B. Distinction of Roles:

Authority & Submission: It's hard for us to look at this objectively, because we live and have been influenced by a culture where submission = doormat. That said, A&S are at the very core of who God is himself **how He relates to Himself within the Trinity from before time!** And he has designed us to follow the same pattern. *Together, complementing one another, is how we show the image of God. (God is not one-dimensional, he's multifaceted)*

We see a distinction of roles prescribed in the first three chapters of Genesis in at least 9 ways:

1. The Order of Creation: Adam was created first & then Eve.

(Gen 2:5-9, 15-25)

⁵When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the Lord God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, ⁶and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground— ⁷then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. ⁸And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. ⁹And out of the ground the Lord God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁵The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. ¹⁶And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

¹⁸Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." ¹⁹Now out of the ground the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. ²⁰The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. ²¹So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²²And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³Then the man said,

"This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."

²⁴Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. ²⁵And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

Adam was created first and that's significant. God could have created them at the same time or created Eve first, but he didn't. There's a term for this: Primogeniture (the priority of the first born, with regard to inheritance and position w/in the family – OT)

It's hard for us to see but no ancient reader would have missed this. The Apostle Paul understood the connection when he wrote his letter to Timothy.

1 Timothy 2:12-13 I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve;

Here Paul interprets Gen 1&2 for us: The order was by design and because Adam is our representative head, it gives men a leadership priority both in the family and in the church...

2. Eve was created from Adam and for Adam:

Adam – slept, and while he slept, God took a rib from him and made Eve & brought her to Adam. She could have been made from a lump of dirt (like Adam) but instead, she was fashioned from his side. (*delicate & dignified*)

Once again it may be a little hard for us in our culture to see this but for the ancient reader and Paul this too signaled authority:

1 Cor 11:7-10 “For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man. For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. That is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head...”

(vs. 14) “Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair it is a disgrace for him, but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory?” (*in other words, “What I’m saying here is so obvious I don’t really need to mention it!”*)

A prominent NT Scholar put it this way: Having your head covered was a sign of authority & modesty in ANE culture and everyone knew it. *We could easily paraphrase Paul’s statement in the following way:*

“Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears a cocktail dress and puts on lipstick it is a disgrace for him?”

3. Eve was created to be Adam’s helper (and not the other way around):

Adam needed help (even in a sinless paradise, man was needy). (Adam - needy, Eve – the supplier of help) We are tempted to balk at the idea of being someone else’s helper but being a Helper is DIGNIFIED. God is described as our helper:

Psalms 54 Behold, God is my helper; the Lord is the upholder of my life.

John 14:16 “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the spirit of truth...” (14:26; 15:26; 16:7)

Helping isn’t about being a door mat: Prov 31:10, 28-30 “She’s not barefoot in the kitchen”

Her orientation is toward her husband and her family & his is toward the city gates...

4. Adam received the creation mandate and it’s prohibitions & not Eve.

Gen 2:15-17 The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. ¹⁶ And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

God could have waited... Instead, God instructed Adam & Adam passed it along to Eve.

5. Adam named Eve both before and after sin entered the world: (2:23 “woman” / 3:20 “Eve”) Naming implies headship

6. Satan approached Eve and not Adam

(Gen 3:1-7)

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?"² And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden,³ but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'"⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die.⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

Again, the ANE audience understood this in a way we often miss today:

1 Tim 2:12- 14 I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor...

NOT women are more easily deceivable... *It took Satan himself to tempt Eve, all she had to do with Adam is hand it to him...*

God designed for the man to lead but Satan went to the woman, making her the leader.

7. Although Eve sinned first, God came to Adam first, holding him accountable.

Gen 3:9-11 "But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, 'Where are you?' And he said, 'I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.' He said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?'"

Rom 5:12 and following: compares *Adam's* failure (not *Eve's*) to Christ's victory

8. The curses on Adam & Eve don't create new roles but simply make their respective roles more complicated.

Eve:

Gen 3:16 "To the woman he said, 'I will surely multiply your pain in child-bearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you." (See 4:7)

Adam: (3:17-19)

9. Male & Female leadership & submission reflects the Trinity –

Within the Trinity itself there is absolute equality in value and person but there are distinct roles.

Though each are fully God, the Father sends the Son into the world and both Father and Son send the Spirit, so in turn the Spirit's work in us leads us to the Son, through whom we have access to the Father. Authority & Submission are divine attributes and worth celebrating!

III. Application:

Egalitarian's claim that Complementarity will lead and has led to the ill treatment and abuse of women, and they are right, at least partially.

Bradford Wilcox's, fantastic study titled, "Soft Patriarchs, New Men: How Christianity Shapes Fathers and Husbands. He came to the following two conclusions:

"Compared to their unaffiliated and mainline counterparts, conservative Protestant married men with children are consistently the most active and expressive fathers and the most emotionally engaged husbands. (195)

"Compared to the other men in the study, [nominal conservative Protestant men] are not highly invested in the emotional and practical lives of their families. They do the least household labor, and they are the most likely to physically abuse their wives."

In other words, complementarian men who are not immersed in Gospel centered worship are the worst abusers of women. More so than even unchurched atheist!

"Part of why Complementarity is beautiful in a gospel context is that in this context, we are members of a church. Because gospel-driven people can be abusive, they can fall in their sin. But if you are a wife and your husband is sinning against you, your check and balance is your membership in a church. Your pastor and your elders are there for you, to help you both and in the world you just don't have that." Rosaria Butterfield

1. Husbands immerse yourself in a good gospel centered church. Show Honor to your wife. Love her, cherish her as Christ does the church. Don't demand submission, submission is something given not taken. Provide for her financially, spiritually (put thought into leading devotions for your family). Men, by nature, we want to coast.

Leadership & Submission isn't about who fixes breakfast and washes the dishes. Can you imagine Jesus saying please massage my feet and bring me breakfast in bed?

John 13:3 "Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God... washed the disciples feet!"

Leading isn't about being served: The greatest in the kingdom of heaven are those who serve! James & John: (Mark 10:35, 42-45)

2. Wives: Follow your husband's leadership, when you do you are demonstrating the image of God. If he is abusing you, flee, if laws are being broken, call the police. (Don't fight your husband every time he tries to lead)

Jackie Hill-Perry: I came from a background where women are strong and submission is perceived as weakness, as a believer, seeing Christ in Complementarianism gives me joy about complementarianism. It's not that God has called me to submit to a man because I'm just this weak willed, brittle backed woman, but rather, it's a way for me to mimic God. It's a way for me to live a life of service to my husband, live a life of service to my church, live a life of service to my daughter, like submission is a good thing, because even Christ did it and he's God and he submitted to the Father. So how can I say, 'Oh, I'm above that'!

Anne & I:

I told Anne: grass – hut

Engaged: offered an internship with Navigators

Japan

FC – Pastor

Spiritual Initiation in the Family

Years to figure out Anne really likes to go out to dinner... / Dishes

3. Now on the surface this doesn't seem to apply to **single people** but it really does. God makes different roles for different kind of people. He loves variety, And the roles that we often think less valuable are more valuable in God's eyes. (1 Cor 12) And ultimately those whom God esteems most are those who quietly serve. (Mark 10 – James and John)

4. The Bible has clearly restricted the leadership of the local church to men. But everyone should make sure that our leadership is biblical and while all might not teach and have authority in the church, all can and should pray for your leaders, and engage in encouraging the body, evangelizing and making disciples of your kids, neighbors, co workers, etc.