**Genesis 1-2: Male and Female**

I. Creation: God’s intention for male and female

A. Genesis 1:26-28

1. God created not just humans but male humans and female humans

 a. God created a diversity within humanity

b. Therefore, this diversity is something we should embrace and celebrate rather than minimize

2. God created male and female as equal partners

a. Equal in personhood: both created in the image of God

b. Equal in their role in creation: both called to fill the earth and rule over it

3. God formed a “Blessed Alliance” between male and female

B. Genesis 2

1. Genesis 2 reaffirms the basic ideas of Genesis 1

a. The creation of Adam (v. 7, v. 15)

b. The creation of Eve (v. 18-23)

 1) She is “suitable” = a perfect counterpart

 -She is made from his very core and is “bone of (his) bones and flesh of (his) flesh”

 -there’s no greater suitability/equality than that

 2) She is designed as his “helper”

-She will come alongside him to help in the work of tending to the garden. Together, they are both given authority over and responsibility for the garden

2. Genesis 2 also introduces a leadership dynamic into the partnership

a. As the representative head of the partnership, Adam has a responsibility and authority to lead the partnership in God-glorifying ways

b. There are many evidences of this dynamic in the story

 1) Adam is created first and Eve as his helper

 2) Adam names Eve (2:23)

3) Satan tries to undermine that order by coming to Eve instead of Adam (3:1)

4) Adam fails in his responsibility to lead by being completely silent during the entire temptation (3:6)

5) Rather than accept responsibility, Adam blames Eve (3:11-12)

6) When God approaches the guilty couple, he comes first to Adam to demand an accounting (3:9). The New Testament affirms this in saying that sin came through Adam (as the representative head of the couple). See Romans 5:12ff

 3. To sum up God’s intention at creation

God created the diversity of male and female as these equal partners given authority to rule over God’s world with the man playing a role in leading the partnership in God-glorifying ways

II. The Consequences of the Fall

 A. Genesis 3:16

1. The woman’s desire will be to control, master, and usurp the man’s authority

2. The man will rule over the woman

B. The history of marriage

1. The man’s leadership is no longer experienced as life giving but rather frustrating and painful.

2. A power struggle is introduced into a relationship that was supposed to exist in perfect harmony

 a. Wives fight against the leadership of their husbands

b. Husbands use that leadership in unhealthy ways (often in dominating ways)

III. Redemption in Christ

A. Redemption in Marriage (Ephesians 5)

1. God has an amazing purpose for human marriage

a. God’s “mystery” or secret is that all along he intended human marriage to point beyond itself to the relationship between Christ and his bride, the church (v. 31-32)

 b. Our marriages exist to put on display the love of Christ for his people

c. God’s purpose assumes a leadership dynamic: the husband plays the role of Christ and the wife plays the role of the church (v. 23)

2. Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church (v. 25)

a. Husbands are to express their leadership not through domination but Christ-like sacrificial service for the benefit of their wives

 3. Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord (v. 22)

 a. Wives exhibit courageous, Christ-like submission

b. This does not involve being a doormat, but it does involve engaging your husband with honor and respect

4. There is a beautiful dance and drama when both husband and wife faithfully live our their calling, and Christ is glorified

5. Notice, this does not give specific prescriptions for household roles in a marriage (who does the cooking, finances, laundry, etc.)

6. Notice, this is why same sex marriage isn’t part of God’s plan for marriage. There is a diversity of male and female required to live out the drama of Christ and his church

B. Redemption in the church (1 Corinthians 12)

1. God has an amazing purpose for the church

a. We are the body of Christ here on earth (v. 27)

 b. There is a great diversity God gives the church to be the body (v. 12)

 2. There is great equality between men and women in the church a. Both men and women receive the Holy Spirit (v. 13)

b. The Spirit gives gifts to men and women without discrimination (v. 7-11)

 c. So men and women ought to exercise their gifts to build up the body

3. Yet the New Testament affirms a leadership dynamic in the church

a. While men and women serve and lead according to their giftedness, primary leadership is entrusted to spiritually qualified men ( = elders). See 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

b. The reasons given for male eldership are not culturally conditioned, but rather harken back to God’s creation design in Genesis 2. Namely, that Adam was created first and Eve as his helper (see 1 Cor 11:8-9 and 1 Tim 2:13)

4. These elders are to express their leadership not in the domination of the fall but in Christ-like sacrificial service for the body (see 1 Peter 5:1-3)

a. A leadership that empowers the body (men and women) to build itself up as each uses his/her gifts

b. A leadership that hears the voices of the body (men and women) in seeking God’s will

IV. Conclusion

I. Husbands, your wives are longing for you to provide spiritual leadership in your marriage and family. It’s not about being spiritually perfect, it’s about humbly putting in the intentionality and effort.

II. Women, hopefully you see how Grace’s structure of male leadership flows from our best understanding of Scripture, rather than from some arbitrary reason or simply a tradition. We want to grow in exercising our leadership so that your gifts are used fully and your voices are heard.

III. To all, let’s celebrate the beauty of what God did in creating men and women to partner in this world.

**Discussion Questions**

1. What specific idea from Sunday’s message struck you the most and why?

2. On Sunday it was argued that Genesis 1 and 2 paint a picture of men and women as equal partners in God’s plan to rule over his creation with husbands playing a role in leading the marriage partnership in God-glorifying ways. Was that argument convincing to you? Why or why not?

3. Based on Ephesians 5, we discussed how husbands and wives are to enact the drama between Christ and the church in their relationship with each other. Accordingly, husbands are to exhibit Christ-like sacrificial servant leadership and wives are to exhibit Christ-like courageous submission. How do you react to that picture? And for those of you who are married, how does that picture reflect your own marriage? Are there any particular issues in your marriage that this raises?

4. We discussed the structure of Grace Fellowship Church in having primary leadership given to men (all the elders are men). Given that structure, are there ways you’d like to see Grace grow in valuing women, giving them more of a voice, and/or utilizing more of their gifts?

5. Where have you seen men and women partnering together in really fruitful ways for the sake of God’s kingdom?