IDENTITY AND SEXUALITY • TOPICAL BIBLE STUDY

BIBLICAL MANHOOD AND WOMANHOOD

STUDENT OUTLINE

Name: _____ Date: _____

KEY QUESTION

What does the Bible say about what it means to be a man or a woman — and why does God's design matter in a culture redefining both?

KEY DEFINITIONS

Plain Language Definitions

Complementarianism	Men and women are equal in dignity and spiritual standing, but God designed them with distinct and complementary roles — especially in marriage and church leadership.
Egalitarianism	Men and women are equal in dignity, spiritual standing, AND role — there is no God-ordained difference in authority or leadership between men and women.

WHERE BOTH VIEWS AGREE

Both affirm the full dignity and equal spiritual worth of men and women. Both affirm that all spiritual gifts are given to men and women alike. The disagreement is about role and authority in specific contexts — not about value or spiritual capacity.

What did you think about when you first heard the topic of this study?

KEY SCRIPTURES

Anchor Passages

Genesis 1:27 (NLT)

"So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."

Genesis 2:18 (NLT)

"Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him.'"

Ephesians 5:25 (NLT)

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"For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her."

Galatians 3:28 (NLT)

"There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus."

UNDERSTANDING HEADSHIP

What Biblical Headship Actually Means

The standard Paul sets for male headship in Ephesians 5 is Christ's sacrificial love for the Church. The husband's call is the more demanding of the two instructions — he is called to lay down his life, preferences, and comfort for the good of his wife. Biblical headship is the most demanding role in the marriage, not the most privileged one.

WHAT HEADSHIP IS NOT

Headship is not a license for control, abuse, or the dismissal of a wife's wisdom and perspective. Any use of male headship to justify dominance or silence is a distortion of the text — not an application of it.

Submission is not inferiority. The same Greek word (hupotasso) is used of Jesus submitting to the Father — without implying that He is less divine. Submission is a posture of trust, not a statement about worth.

Discuss: What would a marriage look like where both the husband and wife took their Ephesians 5 instruction seriously?

LESSON OBJECTIVES

Five Things We'll Cover

OBJECTIVE 1	**Understand that male and female are God's creational design — equal in dignity, distinct in design**	**Genesis 1:27 • Genesis 2:18–25 • Psalm 139:13–14**
OBJECTIVE 2	**Understand the complementarian reading of Ephesians 5 and why male headship is defined by sacrifice, not dominance**	**Ephesians 5:22–33 • 1 Corinthians 11:3 • 1 Peter 3:1–7**
OBJECTIVE 3	**Understand Galatians 3:28 correctly — and why it does not erase the creational distinctions of Genesis 1–2**	**Galatians 3:26–29 • 1 Corinthians 12:12–27**
OBJECTIVE 4	**Identify what biblical manhood and womanhood look like in practice — in marriage, the church, and everyday life**	**Proverbs 31:10–31 • Titus 2:1–8 • 1 Timothy 3:1–7**
OBJECTIVE 5	**Engage the cultural conversation about gender with biblical clarity and pastoral compassion**	**Colossians 2:8 • Romans 12:2 • 1 Peter 3:15–16**

DISCERNMENT FRAMEWORK

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Four Questions for the Gender Conversation

Apply these questions to any claim about gender — from within the church debate and from the broader culture.

1	Does this view root its understanding of gender in creation — or in culture?
2	Does it maintain both equal dignity and meaningful distinction between male and female?
3	Does it take the full counsel of Scripture seriously — or select only the passages that support one conclusion?
4	Does it produce the character and virtue Scripture describes — or justify the avoidance of responsibility?

Apply these four questions to one gender-related claim you have heard recently.

Claim: _____

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

For Group Conversation

1. What does it tell us about God that He created human beings as male and female?
2. How does the standard Paul sets for male headship in Ephesians 5 compare to the way headship is often practiced?
3. The Proverbs 31 woman is capable, entrepreneurial, and strong. How does she challenge your assumptions?
4. How does the Trinity help us understand the relationship between equality and differentiated role?
5. How do you hold God's design clearly and hold a person struggling with gender identity gently at the same time?
6. What is one thing about biblical manhood or womanhood you have either overcorrected or undercorrected?

PERSONAL APPLICATION

This Week's Challenge

KEY INSIGHT

Biblical manhood and womanhood are not restrictions on human flourishing. They are the shape of it — the specific contours of how men and women image God together in a way neither can alone.

Identify one area where your understanding or practice of biblical manhood or womanhood needs to grow:

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What would one concrete step toward faithful alignment look like this week?

Prayer for this area:

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