IDENTITY AND SEXUALITY • TOPICAL BIBLE STUDY

BIBLICAL MANHOOD AND WOMANHOOD

TEACHER LESSON PLAN

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?

STUDY OVERVIEW

AUDIENCE	Adults, small groups, Sunday school, mid-week Bible study
LENGTH	60–90 minutes
CATEGORY	Identity and Sexuality • Disciple Blueprint Teacher Membership

BEFORE YOU TEACH

This topic sits at the intersection of creation theology, marriage, and the cultural debate about gender identity. Know your room — some participants will have been hurt by distorted applications of this teaching. Start with equal dignity before discussing differentiated roles. Lead with the best version of the biblical view, not its worst applications.

What to Prepare

- Read the full teaching post at discipleblueprint.com before the session
- Print the Student Outline for each participant
- Write the key question on a whiteboard or screen
- Review the objection responses — the gender identity question is likely to arise
- Be prepared to acknowledge the painful history of abuse connected to distorted versions of headship
- Keep complementarianism/egalitarianism and gender identity as distinct questions throughout

SESSION PLAN

Session Outline (60–90 min)

TIME	SEGMENT	WHAT TO DO
5 min	Opening	Open in prayer. Ask: "What is one message you received about what it means to be a man or a woman?" Let 2–3 respond. Do not evaluate yet.
10 min	Overview	Present the key question. Establish equal dignity first — this is non-negotiable common ground. Define complementarianism and egalitarianism clearly. Note that the debate about roles is separate from the cultural debate about gender identity.

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15 min	Biblical Foundation	Cover Genesis 1:27 (creational design), Genesis 2 (complementarity), Ephesians 5 (headship as sacrifice), and Galatians 3:28 (equal spiritual standing). Establish that equal dignity and differentiated role are not contradictions.
20 min	Objectives 1–5	Walk through each objective. Objective 2 (headship as sacrifice) and Objective 4 (Proverbs 31) tend to generate the most response. Objective 5 (gender identity) requires the most pastoral care.
10 min	Objections	Present the four objection responses. Acknowledge the painful history of distorted headship. Be ready for the gender identity and women in ministry questions.
10 min	Group Activity	Run the Ephesians 5 activity — read both sides of the instruction and compare how demanding each is. Identify one concrete practice to take home. Close in prayer.
5 min	Closing	Assign the weekly challenge. Close by affirming that God's design for gender is not a burden — it is the shape of human flourishing.

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

Five Objectives with Teacher Guidance

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

The distinction between male and female is a creational reality built into human beings before sin. It reflects something about the image and character of God Himself. This is the foundation everything else builds on.

TEACHER GUIDANCE

Note that Genesis 1:27 contains the creation of sexual differentiation in the same breath as the creation of the imago Dei. Male and female together reflect the image of God in a way that neither does alone. Start here before discussing roles.

Ask: What does it tell us about God that He created human beings as male and female, rather than a single undifferentiated type?

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

Paul's instruction in Ephesians 5 is directed equally to husbands and wives, with the husband's call being the more demanding of the two. The standard set for headship is the cross — Christ gave everything for the Church.

TEACHER GUIDANCE

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Spend real time on verse 25: 'love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her.' Also address 1 Peter 3:7 — Peter says a husband's prayers will be hindered if he does not treat his wife with understanding and honor. Biblical headship is accountable to God.

Ask: What would it look like for a husband to lead his marriage the way Christ leads the Church? What would change in most marriages if husbands took that standard seriously?

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 • Romans 12:4–8

Galatians 3:28 establishes equal spiritual standing of all believers. It does not eliminate the distinctions Paul maintained in Ephesians 5 and 1 Timothy 2. Equality and differentiation are not opposites in Scripture — the same pattern appears in the Trinity.

TEACHER GUIDANCE

The Trinity is the most helpful analogy. The Father, Son, and Spirit are equal in essence, yet the Son submits to the Father without being less divine. Submission within the Godhead does not imply lesser worth. The same logic applies to gender distinctions.

Ask: How does the Trinity help us understand how two people can be equal in dignity but different in role? Where else does Scripture show that pattern?

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 • Ephesians 6:4

Biblical manhood and womanhood are primarily about character and virtue, not prohibition. Proverbs 31 describes a woman of remarkable capability, initiative, and strength — not a passive domestic figure. Biblical womanhood is active and powerful.

TEACHER GUIDANCE

The Proverbs 31 woman runs a business, manages property, serves the poor, and commands community respect. Use her to correct the passivity misimpression early. For manhood, use Ephesians 6:4 and Titus 2:1–2 to present active, responsible, spiritually engaged character.

Ask: What surprised you about the Proverbs 31 woman? How does her portrait challenge common assumptions about biblical womanhood?

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

Christians need a framework for engaging gender identity questions with both theological clarity and genuine pastoral compassion. The biblical position is clear. The pastoral posture must also be clear — genuine care, not contempt.

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TEACHER GUIDANCE

The church has often been cruel to people experiencing gender dysphoria. That cruelty is not a biblical response. You can hold the design clearly while holding the person gently. That combination is what the gospel produces. Keep the gender identity question distinct from the gender roles debate.

Ask: How do you hold the clarity of God's creational design and genuine compassion for someone struggling with gender identity at the same time?

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SCRIPTURE REFERENCE

Key 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)

"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."

Proverbs 31:25–26 (NLT)

"She is clothed with strength and dignity, and she laughs without fear of the future. When she speaks, her words are wise, and she gives instructions with kindness."

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Discussion Questions

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 common assumptions about biblical womanhood?
4. How does the Trinity help us understand the relationship between equality and differentiated role?
5. How do you hold God's creational design and genuine compassion for someone struggling with gender identity at the same time?
6. What is one thing about biblical manhood or womanhood you have either overcorrected or undercorrected? What would faithful alignment look like?

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.

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The goal is not to produce compliance with a list of roles. It is to help your group understand why the design is good, what it is meant to reflect, and how to live it out with both conviction and compassion.

TEACHER NOTES

Tips for Leading This Conversation

> KNOW YOUR ROOM: Some participants will have been hurt by distorted applications of headship. Some will be engaged with gender identity questions through family or workplace. Surface where people are before pressing toward conclusions.

> PRESENT THE BEST VERSION: Always teach complementarianism from its best expression — sacrificial servant-leadership, capable and dignified womanhood. Acknowledge that distortions exist. Building credibility makes the teaching receivable.

> USE PROVERBS 31 EARLY: She is your most powerful tool for correcting the passivity misimpression. A businesswoman, landowner, teacher, and community servant. Use her to reframe the whole conversation about what biblical womanhood actually looks like.

> KEEP THE QUESTIONS SEPARATE: The complementarian/egalitarian debate and the gender identity debate are related but distinct. Address them sequentially. Conflating them produces confusion in both directions.

> THE TRINITY ANALOGY IS YOUR PRECISION TOOL: Equal essence, differentiated function, without any implication of lesser worth. It handles the Galatians 3:28 objection theologically and cleanly.

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