

# The Bible and Gender

By David Hutchison

## Pre-Session Assignments

One week before the session, participants will take the following assignments.

### Assignment One

Read Genesis 1:26-27; 3:1-7 and the discussion of Genesis 1:26-27 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answers to the following questions: Did God's creation of both genders come before or after the fall? What do you think this implies about the importance and value of both genders?

### Assignment Two

Read Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:18-24; 1 Timothy 2:12 and the discussion of Galatians 3:28 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answers to the following questions: Based on what Paul wrote in these passages, do you think Paul meant that there are no differences at all between men and women and that slavery will immediately cease to exist?

### Assignment Three

Read Mark 10:42-45 and the discussion of Romans 12:1-2 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answers to the following questions: How would you describe Jesus' attitude toward servanthood? How does Jesus view rights and privileges?

### Scripture to Memorize

*"So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."* Genesis 1:27

### Session Goal

Consistent with God's Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit - by the end of this session, disciples will understand that gender is a gift of God, that all people are equally valuable in God's sight and that servanthood and sacrifice should characterize our lives, whether we are male or female.

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## It's in the Book

30 minutes

### Real-Life Scenario

Your friends, Blake and Tara, just dragged you into an argument they have been having. Blake thinks males are inherently better than females. Tara says 95 percent of males are pure evil and women should rule the world. Both are looking to you to be the voice of reason. What would you say to them?

### Gender Is a Gift of God

Read Genesis 1:26-27 and Psalm 139:13-16 out loud.

#### Studying the Passage, Genesis 1:26-27

**Verse 26. Our image.** Humans represent God and are patterned after God. Knowing all that image entails is difficult. At a bare minimum, we can affirm that humans represent God like nothing else in creation. Humans are the pinnacle of God's creation. All humans have dignity by virtue of being created in God's image.

**Verse 27. male and female.** God created both male and female. This lesson will later affirm that God's creation is very good (read Genesis 1:31). Gender is not a response to sin or an accident, but a purposeful activity of God before the fall.

#### Assignment One Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment One** during the week should now report on the timing of creation and the fall, along with the implications for the value of both genders.

#### Studying the Passage, Psalm 139:13-16

The Bible speaks of creation as occurring through God's Word. **Verse 14. fearfully and wonderfully made.** The Bible also tells us that God skillfully fashioned humans. Because God formed and wove us, we are fearfully, wonderfully and skillfully made. God's creation of each human was purposeful and excellent. We should understand God's creation of gender as a gift by an excellent Creator.

### All People Are Equally Valuable

Read Galatians 3:28-29 out loud.

#### Studying the Passage

**Verse 28. you are all one.** This passage affirms the unity of the people of God. In Christ, all people are on equal footing regardless of race, gender or vocation. All who are saved come to Christ in the same way.

**Verse 29. offspring, heirs according to promise.** Paul declares that all of these people are heirs, not only the males. 1 Peter 3:7 makes the same point: females are joint heirs. If you are tempted to think that God likes men better than women or that the Bible does not think highly of women, think again!

Paul does not mean in these two verses that there are no differences between men and women or that slavery will immediately cease to exist. Otherwise he could not have written what he did in numerous other places. Galatians was one of Paul's earliest letters. He was well aware of what he wrote here when he later discussed the differing roles of men, women, and the responsibilities of slaves. All share equal value before God and all come to Christ in the same way, but that does not mean all will have the same roles.

### **Assignment Two Feedback**

The person who completed **Assignment Two** during the week should now report on passages which discuss ongoing differences between men and women, as well as the proper behavior of slaves. (We will explore these issues in more detail in upcoming lessons.)

## **Service, Not Selfishness**

**Read** Romans 12:1-2 out loud.

### **Discussion Questions**

How often do you hear people talk about their rights and privileges? How often do you hear people talk about willingly giving up these rights?

### **Assignment Three Feedback**

The person who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now report on Jesus' perspective on servanthood.

### **Studying the Passage**

The practical key to understanding the value of gender is to realize that you should offer your life as a living sacrifice, whether you are male or female. You do not demonstrate your value by focusing on rights and privileges. Instead, like Jesus, you humbly serve others.

**Verse 1. living sacrifice, holy and acceptable.** Prior to the sacrificial death of Jesus, faithful believers would regularly offer animal sacrifices to God. These kinds of sacrifices are no longer necessary since Jesus offered Himself as a once-and-for-all sacrifice (see Hebrews 7:27). Yet the life of a believer still is a life of sacrifice. We are a living sacrifice in that we maintain our lives as we offer everything we are. Furthermore, this is an ongoing sacrifice. Real life begins when those who are in Christ die to themselves daily (see Luke 9:23).

**Verse 2. conformed . . . transformed.** We cannot live the Christian life of sacrifice by operating according to the world's guidelines. In order to willingly sacrifice everything to God, we must be transformed and have our minds renewed. This takes place as we study the Bible and as we talk with Jesus every day. Whether you are male or female, your life should be one of sacrifice and service. **will of God.** Having our minds renewed helps us understand God's will. You may wonder what God's will is for you in some very specific way. God does have specific plans for us and He desires to lead us specifically, but if we are wise, we will focus first on the many specific things God has already told us in the Bible.

If you can forsake your rights and offer your life as a living sacrifice, you will much more readily accept the challenging commands God gives you throughout the Bible. Remember that your life is not your own. You were bought with a price and have declared that Jesus is Lord.

### **On Your Own**

The Bible says that we should not be conformed to this world, yet many Christians look much like the world. In the space below, write some things that influence people to think and act like the world. Which of these are most dangerous to your life as a Christian?

### **Heart and Hands**

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven. Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit reveals to you below and then be ready to share that with the group

### **Since Last Week**

5 minutes

Give the group this update: "In our last session I made a commitment to . . . I want to let you know how that turned out. On that same issue, I think the Holy Spirit now is leading me to . . ."

### **Grace-Filled Accountability**

5 minutes

Disciples can agree on a way to hold one another accountable. Confessing faults with other disciples allows them to offer grace, insights and encouragement. Even more important is confession to Christ, the source of true forgiveness and cleansing.

### **Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service**

5 minutes

Groups of disciples always are making preparations for evangelism, missions and service. Use these minutes to work on the next plan.

### **Prayer**

7 minutes

Every disciple will pray aloud, offering praise to Jesus, thanking Him specifically for His gracious acts, making heartfelt confession, committing to actions flowing from the Bible study, praying toward evangelism locally and globally and interceding for others as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

## **At Home: Nail It Down**

This week's lesson emphasized three truths from the Bible: 1) gender is a gift of God, 2) all people are equally valuable in God's sight, and 3) all people should offer their lives as a living sacrifice to God.

Genesis 1:26-27 tells us that God created all people in His image, both male and female. Creation in the image of God sets you apart from everything else in all of creation. We have value and dignity because God created us in His image. In Psalm 139:13-16, we learned that when God created people, He skillfully and carefully fashioned us. We are the product of a careful and purposeful Creator. We do well to recognize that God, the Creator and Ruler of the universe, gave us our gender on purpose.

We learned that all people, whether male or female, are viewed as equal in God's sight. Galatians 3:28-29 tells us that, in Christ, all people are one. We are all on equal footing. Furthermore, all of those who are in Christ are joint heirs. By listening to other writings from Paul, we learned that this verse does not mean there are no differences at all between males and females. While all share the same value and the same inheritance, each has different roles.

Finally, we learned that we should follow Jesus' example of servanthood and offer our lives as a living sacrifice, regardless of our gender (Romans 12:1-2). The Christian life is not a focus on rights and privileges but an ongoing surrender to a good God. As we embrace the call to be a living sacrifice, we will more readily say yes to God's challenging commands. In doing so, we will find true freedom.

### **Follow-Up Question**

*What does the Bible tell us about the value of males and females?*

The Making Disciples curriculum is a gift from Southwestern Seminary to those who, for the glory of the Father and in the power of the Spirit, will spend a lifetime embracing the full supremacy of the Son, responding to His kingly reign in all of life, inviting Christ to live His life through them, and joining Him in making disciples among all peoples.