

The Role of Women

By Candi Finch

Pre-Session Assignments

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

Assignment One

Read Genesis 1:26-31 and then read the comments related to Genesis 1:26-27 in the section **It's in the Book**. Jot down anything verses 26-31 say that is true for both men and women. For example, verse 27 says both men and women are created in the image and likeness of God. Prepare to share your answers with the group.

Assignment Two

Read Genesis 2:15-17 and then read the comments related to Genesis 2:4-17 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answers to the following question: What are the specific tasks or instructions God gave to Adam before Eve was created?

Assignment Three

Read Genesis 2:18-25 and then read the comments related to Genesis 2:18 in the section **It's in the Book**. After God said it wasn't good for Adam to be alone, He told him to name all the animals before He created Eve. Prepare to share your answer to the following question: Based on verse 20, what could be possible reasons God had Adam name all the animals before He created woman?

Scripture to Memorize

"Then the LORD God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.'" Genesis 2:18

Session Goal

Consistent with God's Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit - by the end of this session, disciples will be able state the basic biblical purpose for the distinct creation of the woman.

Candi Finch is assistant professor of Theology in Women's Studies at Southwestern Seminary. Candi's greatest passion is to see teenagers and women come to know the Lord and become mature disciples of Christ. Several women invested in her life when she was a new believer in high school. The impact they had on her reminds her daily of the positive influence we can have on others for Christ. Candi has contributed to several books for women and youth, including *Women's Evangelical Commentary on the New Testament and Old Testament*, *The Study Bible for Women*, *Impact: The Student Leadership Bible*, and *Critical Issues, Absolute Answers: Solutions for Students*.

It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

As a child you may have heard the nursery rhyme about little boys and girls: “What are little boys made of? Snips and snails, and puppy dogs tails; That's what little boys are made of! What are little girls made of? Sugar and spice and all things nice; That's what little girls are made of!” If someone asked you to describe the difference between males and females (other than the obvious biological differences), what would you say? Are there any differences? Do you think the Bible outlines any unique roles for men and women?

Read Genesis 1:24-31 out loud.

Studying the Passage

Genesis 1:1 - 2:3 gives a brief summary of what happened on each of the days of creation. On the sixth day, God created land animals (1:24-25) and mankind (1:26-27).

Verses 26-27. man. The Hebrew word used for man is *adam* and can refer to humanity in general (men and women), or it can refer specifically to males. The context of this passage makes clear that this word signifies humanity in general in verses 26-27.

Verse 27. in His own image. The Hebrew term used for “image” does not refer to physical appearance here because God is Spirit (John 4:24). Both men and women are created in the image of God, affirming that human beings are like God in ways distinct from the rest of creation. Mankind represents God in a way unlike any other part of His creation.

Discussion Questions

What is the significance of the fact that every human being is created in the image and likeness of God? How should that impact the way we treat people on a daily basis?

Assignment One Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment One** during the week can now report on what is true about both men and women from Genesis 1:26-31.

Read Genesis 2:4-25 out loud.

Studying the Passage

While Genesis 1:26-31 shows equality in the personhood of men and women, Genesis 2:4-25 describes the unique purpose or role for the creation of woman. Chapter 2 gives a more detailed account of what happened on the sixth day of creation.

Verse 7. man. The context of this verse makes it clear that man here refers to Adam, a male human being, and not man in the generic sense of mankind.

Verse 15. work. This word can also be translated “cultivate” and describes the task God gave to Adam of service and provision, showing that work is not a result of the fall. Before sin entered the world, God gave Adam tasks to do. **keep.** This assignment was one of protection or guarding since *keep* means “to watch over.”

Assignment Two Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Two** during the week can now report on what specific tasks or instructions God gave to Adam before Eve was created.

Studying the Passage

Verse 18. not good. This word indicates moral excellence or high quality. For the first time God designated something as not good or ideal. Though after each day of creation God surveyed His creative work and deemed it “good” (1:4, 10, 12, 18, 25) or “very good” (1:31), the creation of mankind was not pronounced ideal until both Adam and Eve had been created.

Assignment Three Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now report on what possible reason God had for Adam naming all the animals before He created Eve.

Studying the Passage

Verses 18, 20. helper. The Hebrew word used here does not suggest a demeaning, less important or less valuable role. Using the same term, God described Himself as a helper for His children (Exodus 18:4; Deuteronomy 33:7; and Psalm 20:2). However, *helper* does suggest a distinct role for women since Eve was created as a helper for Adam and not the other way around. **fit.** In the Hebrew, this description of the kind of helper Eve was created to be can be translated as “his complement” or “one who is like him” or “one corresponding to” or “comparable.” This suggests that the woman is like him in contrast to all the animals he will name in verses 19-20.

Verse 22. made. God literally built or fashioned Eve. He is the Creator. He decided to make her female and Adam male. **rib.** Note that Eve was made of the same material as Adam.

Verse 23. Man . . . woman. There is a word play in the Hebrew language here because the words Adam uses to describe man and woman are from the same root. Men and women are of the same kind (human beings), yet in His infinite wisdom God created two distinct genders. Each person’s gender is determined by God (see Psalm 139:13).

On Your Own

In the space below, describe some specific and practical ways women can reflect their unique role as helpers. In addition, in what ways can guys encourage and honor that role?

When everyone is finished, the group can share their responses.

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** at 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

In today's society, there is a trend toward making things gender neutral; everything from bathrooms to the language we use to college dorm rooms. Some people even believe people can choose their own gender or change it if they wish. However, God created men and women to be distinct, yet complementary, genders.

In the passage you studied with your group, you saw that God *intentionally* created men and women as distinct beings (Genesis 1:27; 2:18). While both girls and guys are given the responsibility of being God's image bearers to the rest of creation (Genesis 1:27), God had a specific purpose in mind when He created Eve. She was to be a "helper" for Adam (Genesis 2:18, 20).

Being a helper does not mean Eve was inferior to Adam in any way. In fact, men and women need each other. They are interdependent (1 Corinthians 11:11) but not interchangeable with each other. An interdependent community was part of God's plan from the beginning, before sin ever entered the world (Genesis 2:18).

The Bible teaches that things can be equal in value and worth, yet have distinctions. An example of this is the Trinity. Each member of the Trinity is equally God, but God the Father has some roles distinct from God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Each member of the Trinity is equally God and equal in value, yet distinct in some of that member's functions.

Another example is found in 1 Corinthians 12 regarding spiritual gifts. Every Christian is equally part of the body of Christ, with none more important than another. However, each has distinct gifts to serve that body. God gives each Christian woman her spiritual gift just as He desires (1 Corinthians 12:18). God, in His infinite wisdom, has designed all mankind with equal value but different roles.

Both men and women are created in the image and likeness of God. Men and women are of the same kind (human beings), yet God created two distinct genders. Each person's gender is determined by God. Women, as well as men, have unique roles on earth for the ultimate glory of God.

Follow-Up Question

What was the specific purpose for which God created woman?

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.