

Imago Dei: Male and Female – Gen 1:26-28

Imago Dei and the Battle for Humanity - #1

Introduction – Laws and regulations surrounding sexuality and marriage issues have been coming fast and furious in the last several months. Like a pot finally boiling over, the heat has been growing for some time, but only now are some finally noticing. How did we get here? What can look simply like a debate over “sexual freedom” is actually a direct attack upon the doctrine of Creation, the doctrine of Man, and the doctrine of the Cultural Mandate. What is going on is an act of theological defiance, an apostasy of all that is Christendom.

Back to Basics – The text of course comes at the end of the story of Creation in Genesis 1. There we learn of God’s absolute sovereignty over everything created and that everything was created by the word of His power. His glorious capstone to His creation work is man, “*Let Us make man in Our own image, according to Our likeness*” (v26). Verse 27 describes the creation of man, male and female, as the work of that image-bearing creation. Male and female are not accidents in the providence of God; they are design-features in image-bearing. As image-bearers, Man is commanded to be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and take dominion over everything. This would be “according to” God’s likeness, and as an image-bearer, everything Man did was to be “good,” acceptable and holy to God.

In Order to Be Good – Chapter 2 gives us more information. It actually was not at first “good” as Adam worked alone (Gen 2:18). God would give him a “*helper suitable to him*” (2:19). This helper would come from Adam (and not the ground) and be fashioned by God. She would be from Adam but she would not be another Adam. Nor was she only a servant for a very-busy Adam. This is critical to understanding what it is to be made in God’s image. Only after there is the perfect match is the image-bearer declared “good,” or well-suited for the purposes God gave mankind for their existence.

Covenantal Relations – The mysteries run deep, but consider. Adam *recognizes* and *rejoices* in what God did (2:21-24), and though he breaks out in the first love poem ever written, there is even more going on here. She becomes more than a friend; she becomes his companion. Together, they become the prototype of intimate companionship protected by covenant vows. They become the example of what family, society, and culture will be built upon. What is at the center of this? “...*and they shall become one flesh.*” Apparently without this, mankind cannot accomplish what God has created man for and commanded him to do.

Trinity-Connections – Bearing the image of God must include a reflection of the Trinity. That is one reason why it was not good for man to be alone (“Let Us make man...”). In order for the Father to be a “father,” He must be in relation to a Son. The Father and the Son are both God, fully and completely, and yet they are not the same. In a similar way, male and female are both fully and completely human, and yet they are not the same. It is said that the Person of the Holy Spirit is the covenant love and mutual glorifying of the Father and the Son, full of life and proceeding from them. The intimate, covenant love and mutual glorifying of a husband and a wife brings forth abundant life as well: children, clans, communities, and nations come forth. And this is why the story of the creation of woman ends with instruction on marriage, a definition of marriage: “*therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh*” (v28).

Trinity-Differentiations – “(A) *fundamental principle is that everything we are images God. Therefore (especially since the body itself participates in the image), we would expect that our sexual and social diversity, also, would picture God in some way*” – John Frame. This is not to say that God is “male” or “female,” any more than saying God has eyes because we have eyes. But having eyes teaches us that God sees all things (Psalm 94:9). The Spirit brings forth “*children of God*” (John 1:12, Rom 8:14ff). The love of a husband for his wife reveals Christ’s love for the church (Eph 5:25-33). A wife’s submission to her husband images Christ’s submission to the Father (1 Cor 11:3).

Imago Dei and the Battle for Humanity – Lose the “*image of God*” definitions of Genesis 1 and 2 and you will lose the meaning, purpose, value, and destiny of humanity, of what it means to be human. Twist those teachings and you will twist the doctrines of Creation, Man, the Cultural Mandate, as well as pervert the doctrine of the Trinity. Some takeaways –

Individually – Each of us individually is created fully in the image of God. But this is only true because there are males and females. This is true practically (how did you get here?), but it is also true on a far deeper, transcendent level. We are not human unless we are “male” or “female,” and the distinctions are given to us in the world around us as well as definitively in God’s Word. You are only fully human, even while you are single, if there is this biblical, high view of marriage and family.

Human Sexuality – We can only protect the dignity of human sexuality (and stop the exploitation of women and children) when we stand on the Word of God and the doctrine of Man, created male and female as the image of God. The only other option is, “*boys will be boys.*” Christian men: Honor the women in your lives.

Life-Givers – As image-bearers, we are life-givers and community-builders along with stewards of creation. Therefore, no other covenantal union (marriage) exists than that which God has established. Only one man-one woman reflect the image of God in the intimate covenant of marriage, with the potential of life-giving, earth-filling, and dominion taking as companions in the blessings and promises of God.