



GENESIS: OBJECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

I. Objections

A. Theological Questions

1. Didn't the roles in Genesis RESULT from the fall?
2. Aren't the roles in Genesis cultural and time-bound?

B. Practical Questions

1. Maybe that's what the Bible says, but what does the "reality" of history and sociology teach us?

Four Consistent Patterns:

- Sexual division of labor
 - Complimentary roles
 - Female subordination
 - Cultural expressions of gender differences
2. Haven't there been women-led cultures called "matriarchies?"
 3. Wouldn't it be *possible* to have a culture where men and women were the same and shared all responsibilities 50/50?

II. Conclusions

1. Men were created by God to be spiritual and social leaders.

Women were created by God to be necessary helpers and completers.

2. Both men and women's roles carry specific responsibilities.

MEN:

- A Will to Obey
- A Work to Do
- A Woman to Love and Lead

WOMEN:

- A Master to Obey
- A Mission to Complete
- A Man to Respect & Respond to

3. The fall corrupted man's leadership and woman's helpfulness

MEN:

- Passive & Negligent
- Selfish & Dominant
- Abusive & Dangerous

WOMEN:

- Passive & Dependent
- Emotional & Manipulative
- Controlling & Adversarial

4. Spiritual redemption, renewed perspective, and radical commitment to Jesus Christ restores our invaluable feminine identity lost in the fall.
5. Without rebirth in male leadership and female interdependence, our society will follow the way of other empires.

*We are greatly indebted to Robert Lewis of Fellowship Bible Church Little Rock for the basic ideas and outline in this study.

Discussion Questions:

1. From our Reflection Assignment last week: How does the Genesis pattern of Male/Female roles differ from what you previously thought?
2. Had any of the “Objections” we heard about today occurred to you? What did you think of the answers you heard?
3. Women who are passive and dependant, emotional and manipulative, or controlling and adversarial are standard fare in the popular media (especially sitcoms and chick-flicks). Name some examples. (e.g. Debra in “Everybody Loves Raymond”)
4. To which of these do you find yourself drifting?
5. One of the “Conclusions” today referred to our “invaluable feminine identity.” How would you describe that identity?
6. What can you personally do to restore value to the “feminine identity”? What challenges do you face in the process?

Reflection Assignment:

Think back over the past week. Describe an incident or two in which you were dependent, manipulative, or controlling. List some ways you could have handled the situation differently. What would have been a more “helpful” response?

Passage to Ponder this week: Psalm 139:13-16

Week Fourteen Summary...

Once we’ve taken a look at how Genesis describes the relationship between men and women, there’s a very common response. “Isn’t there another way to look at it?” You are not alone if you’re wondering that. This week we attempted to answer some common “Questions from Genesis.”

Q: Didn’t the roles described in Genesis result from the Fall? In other words, it wasn’t God’s original plan, it’s messed up. If we’re walking with God, this Head and Helper stuff doesn’t apply to us.

A: In fact, the man and the woman received their Head/Helper assignments before the Fall, not after it. It was the failure to fulfill these roles that resulted in their fall into sin.

Q: Aren’t the biblical roles described in Genesis cultural and time-bound?

A: Actually, the roles communicated in Genesis were repeated and applied centuries later by the New Testament writers. They used the Genesis story as transculturally authoritative rather than cultural.

Q: Maybe that’s what the Bible says, but what do History and Sociology teach us?

A: In reality, History and Sociology track pretty closely with what we see in Genesis.

Q: But, haven't there been women-led cultures called "matriarchies" in the past?

A: No. Although there are examples of "matrilineal" societies—the group's genealogy is traced through the women—there have been no true matriarchal societies.

Q: Wouldn't it be *possible* to have a culture where men and women were the same and shared all responsibilities 50/50?

A: In recent history there have been a couple of social experiments with this goal in mind—Soviet Communism and the Israeli Kibbutz. It didn't work too well.

So, if the model for relationships that we see in Genesis is valid, what are some conclusions we can draw from the past two lessons?

- Men were created by God to be spiritual and social leaders. Women were created by God to be necessary helpers. When we abandon or reverse these roles, chaos ensues.
- Both men's and women's roles carry specific responsibilities before God. Men are to provide leadership on God's behalf; women are to give help and support.
- The Fall corrupted both the man's leadership and the woman's helpfulness. As a result we see men who are passive and negligent, selfish and dominant, or abusive and dangerous. And, we see women who are passive and dependant, emotional and manipulative, or controlling and adversarial.
- Spiritual redemption, a renewed perspective, and radical commitment to Jesus Christ can restore the invaluable feminine identity lost in the Fall.
- Without rebirth in male leadership and female interdependence, our society will follow the way of other great empires like Ancient Rome.

On a more hopeful note, societies are made up of individuals. Individual choices set the direction for the culture. We and our families can make choices that go against the cultural trends. Our personal experiences do not have to mirror those of the world around us.