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Teaching Notes

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Gender and Sexual Identity

Lesson #3: Complementary Roles for Men and Women; Homosexuality

I. Defining Biblical Manhood and Womanhood

- Deep gender confusion in our day and age
- Our society (and increasingly our churches and Christian parents) completely unable to answer the questions:

A son's question, "Dad, what does it mean for me to be a man and not a woman?"

Or a daughter's question, "Mom, what does it mean for me to be a woman and not a man?"

A. Definitions of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood

What follows is from John Piper and Wayne Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*: John Piper, Chapter 1: "A Vision of Biblical Complementarity" (p. 31-59)

1. What is Biblical Manhood?

At the heart of mature masculinity is a sense of benevolent responsibility to lead, provide for, and protect women in ways appropriate to a man's differing relationships.

2. What is Biblical Womanhood?

At the heart of mature femininity is a freeing disposition to affirm, receive, and nurture strength and leadership from worthy men in ways appropriate to a woman's differing relationships [John Piper, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, p. 35-36]

II. Complementary Roles

A. What is "Complementarianism"?

1. Basic concept: that men and women have roles that complement each others' roles and each are vital to the health of the family and the church

TGC Confessional Statement: "men and women are not simply interchangeable, but rather they complement each other in mutually enriching ways."

Mary Kassian, TGC: "A complementarian is a person who believes that God created male and female to reflect complementary truths about Jesus. That's the bottom-line meaning of the word. Complementarians believe that males were designed to shine the spotlight on Christ's relationship to the church (and the LORD God's relationship to Christ) in a way that females cannot, and that females were designed to shine the spotlight on the church's relationship to Christ (and Christ's relationship to the LORD God) in a way that males cannot. Who we are as male and female is ultimately not about us. It's about testifying to the story of Jesus. We do not get to dictate what manhood and womanhood are all about. Our Creator does. That's the basis of complementarianism."

2. Key texts

1 Corinthians 11:11-12 In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God.

1 Corinthians 12:14-22 Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. ¹⁵ If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸ But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹ If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, but one body. ²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" ²² On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable

- B. Four Dangers for Complementarians (This entire section comes from Gavin Ortlund)

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/four-dangers-for-complementarians/>

1. Stereotyping gender roles

In cultures where complementarianism is embraced, it can be all too easy to confuse the essence of masculinity or femininity with one particular expression of it. But marriages and church cultures patterned after complementarian convictions will not always look the same; they take on shape and beauty as expressed through particular personalities, cultural locations, and relationship dynamics.

Kathy Keller: “The basic roles – of leader and helper – are binding, but every couple must work out how that will be expressed within their marriage.”

Andreas and Margaret Köstenberger: “Scripture doesn’t give a lot of detail as to how God’s design for man and woman is to be worked out, so a traditional division of labor (women in the kitchen, changing diapers; men at work letting women do all household chores) doesn’t square with the biblical design.”

For people who have grown up in a home in which the wife tends to do the dishes, laundry, and cleaning, and the husband tends to work a job, mow the lawn, and get the oil changed, it can be only too natural to simply assume that this is what complementarianism should always look like. So we should be careful to clarify for people – most of whom have not studied this issue in depth – that embracing complementarianism need not always require embracing these kinds of culturally conditioned roles.

Other stereotypes:

- guys are less sensitive or less emotional than girls
- guys are less talkative than girls
- guys like sports more than girls

It is unfortunate when people stumble over complementarianism because they associate it with such assertions; they are stereotypes, not biblical mandates.

2. Failing to clearly distinguish complementarianism from various kinds of patriarchalism and hierarchicalism

Many people in our culture think only in two categories on the meaning of gender: conservative vs. progressive. But in truth, biblical complementarianism – like the gospel it pictures – will subvert both progressive, egalitarian mindsets as well as traditional, hierarchical/patriarchal mindsets that tend to assign men a more basic

role in society than women. It will stand out as different, as beautiful, as an alternative, not merely in 21st century Manhattan, but also in ancient India, medieval Europe, and 1950s America.

We must also affirm complementarianism over and against any other alternative to the beauty of Ephesians 5. If people only hear us pushing in one direction, we make it easier for people to lump us together with others pushing in the opposite direction. We say, "egalitarianism is wrong"; they hear, "patriarchalism is right." If we distinguish the biblical view of gender from both its progressive and conservative alternatives, we position people better to perceive its nuance and beauty and depth.

3. Defending complementarianism zealously, but failing to live it out beautifully

There is a real danger at hand when the (difficult) goal of defending complementarianism becomes so prominent in our vision that it sidelines the (even more difficult) goal of living it out in a beautiful, life-giving way. Theological integrity is hard and important; godliness and love equally important, and probably harder. But to affirm the truth without also applying it to ourselves is not just incomplete: it is actually a step backward. We should labor to show that complementarianism is not merely biblical, but beautiful.

4. Failing to celebrate the contribution of women

We should be enthusiastic about the myriad ways that God calls and uses women. Too often this comes across as a concession from complementarians, rather than something to rejoice in. And too many complementarian churches are not just "male led," but "male heavy" in their various ministry spheres.

III. Overall Goals for the Class

1. Delight in God's purposes in creating gender
2. Understanding manhood and womanhood biblically
3. Delighting in what God made you to be
4. Honoring what God made others to be
5. Opposing Satanic attacks/argument on this issue
6. Delighting in God-ordained sexuality
7. Embracing holiness as sexual beings
8. Learning to be completely content in what God ordains

9. Celebrating the gospel of Jesus Christ as the only power liberating all sinners from whatever patterns of sin they are displaying in this area

The Gospel, Homosexuality, and Marriage

Obergefell v. Hodges, legal case in which the U.S. Supreme Court ruled (5-4) on June 26, 2015, that state bans on same-sex marriage and on recognizing same-sex marriages duly performed in other jurisdictions are unconstitutional under the due process and equal protection clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

In 2015, before that Supreme Court decision, I did this BFL handout on Gay Marriage:

Time Magazine says no matter what the Supreme Court decides, the nation has already made its decision; the battle is over. On the cover **“Gay Marriage Already Won: The Supreme Court hasn’t made up its mind, but America has.”** (David von Drehle); the cover showed either a gay couple of men or women kissing

“In recent days, weeks and months, the verdict on same-sex marriage has been rendered by rapidly shifting public opinion and by the spectacle of swing-vote politicians scrambling to keep up with it. With stunning speed, a concept dismissed even by most gay-rights leaders just 20 years ago is now embraced by half or more of all Americans, with support among young voters running as high as 4 to 1.”

For years, TV sitcoms have been showing gay characters with tenderness, humor, intelligence, and personality... and holding up to ridicule those who oppose them; recently, a show called “Modern Family” shows a homosexual couple as parents in a variety of humorous settings

Politicians have caved on this issue as well: Bill Clinton signed the traditional “Defense of Marriage” act in 1996, but now calls the bill a mistake; others like Republican Senator Rob Portman from Ohio changed his mind on homosexual marriage after finding out his son was homosexual; others have “learned” and changed

The strategic linking of gay rights to the struggle for civil rights has been a slam dunk for their cause: during a Harrison Ford interview with David Letterman on the Tonight show in which Ford was talking about his role as Branch Rickey in the movie “42” about Jackie Robinson,

Letterman brought up the issue of gay marriage as a civil rights issue and the studio audience clapped vigorously

“Homophobia is like racism and anti-Semitism and other forms of bigotry in that it seeks to dehumanize a large group of people, to deny their humanity, their dignity and personhood. This sets the stage for further repression and violence that spread all too easily to victimize the next minority group.” – Coretta Scott King, wife of Martin Luther King, Jr., *Chicago Defender*, April 1, 1998, front page.

Central Message: Christians must speak/live out the truth in love to minister effectively to the challenge posed by homosexuality in our age.

It’s daunting, because of the growth of the concept of “homophobia”...

“Homophobia” by definition must be an irrational fear of homosexuality or homosexuals. But the Gay Rights agenda has pushed a broader definition to include an opposition to homosexuality itself. That results in a general lumping together of anyone who thinks homosexuality is wrong, with those who would become violent or abusive against homosexuals. That is clearly slanderous, but it is happening commonly.

The following from gotquestions.org (a Christian apologetics site) helps clarify this issue:

Question: "Why are Christians homophobic?"

More often than not, Christians are said to be homophobic simply because they condemn homosexual behavior as sin. But the fact is that the term *homophobic* is merely a word used by homosexual activists and supporters in their attempts to deflect a genuine criticism of an immoral and unhealthy practice. Without question, there are people and organizations who have developed an irrational hate of homosexuals and who are prepared to use violent actions to inflict suffering upon homosexuals. However, the problem is that the homosexual-rights activists have accused anyone who opposes homosexuality of harboring similar hatred. Therefore, Christians who rightly discern that homosexuality is an unnatural sin are equated with violent lunatics who hate for hatred’s sake.

While the Bible strongly condemns homosexuality, it never instructs that homosexuals are to be hated. As Christians, we are to speak out against the perversion of homosexual activity. The Bible is explicit in its condemnation of it, as well as God’s wrath towards those who practice such behavior. As Christians, we are called to clearly and lovingly call sin for what it is. Using the term *homophobia* to refer to anyone who opposes homosexuality is a distraction, not a valid argument or accurate representation. A Christian should have only one fear regarding homosexuals, the fear that they will suffer eternally because of their decision to reject the only means of salvation—the

Lord Jesus Christ who offers the only hope for escape from a degrading and destructive lifestyle. <https://www.gotquestions.org/Christians-homophobic.html>

Most important verse:

Romans 1:16 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

Second most important verses:

We must minister with gentleness and respect:

1 Peter 3:15-16 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶ keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

We must demolish poisonous arguments that kill souls:

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. ⁴ The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵ We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

The difference between “making an argument” (like a lawyer does in a courtroom) and “having an argument” (like an angry couple who can’t seem to get along).

Questions we need to answer:

- 1) Is homosexuality “like any other sin” or is it different?
- 2) Why did God make sex and marriage?
- 3) Is there any way to make a biblical case *for* homosexuality?
- 4) It seems like Jesus never addressed homosexuality. Doesn’t that prove he would support gay marriage?

- 5) Aren't Christians inconsistent when they quote some Old Testament passages on homosexuality, but don't hold to other commands in the OT?
- 6) How should a healthy church deal with this issue?
- 7) What is "same sex attraction"? Is there a genetic basis for it? How should we minister in light of this?
- 8) Can the gospel transform someone's sexual orientation?
- 9) How can we as Christians best face a surrounding culture which is increasingly and aggressively pro-homosexual?
- 10) What about harder cases of transgender, and sex change, and all the (ever-increasing) aspects of this question? How do we minister lovingly and biblically in these harder ethical situations?

I. Starting with Christ

A. Common Misuses of "Jesus" to Make Whatever Point

Robert Gagnon: "When Christians find a specific teaching of one or more New Testament authors to be unappealing, Jesus is often held up as a counterweight. For example, if many New Testament writers emphasized hierarchical structures in their theology, church polity, and domestic arrangements, Jesus did away with hierarchy. If New Testament writers were disinclined to invert the social order, Jesus proclaimed an ethic that fully included women, sinners, the physically challenged, and gentiles. If New Testament writers surrendered to the bourgeois material interests of their own day, Jesus put a premium on social justice to the poor. If New Testament writers were intolerant of non-traditional forms of sexual expression, Jesus elevated tolerance to the level of a core value, especially in the area of sexual ethics.... Given such constructs, it is understandable that many proponents of same-sex relationships put a positive spin on the silence of Jesus as regards homosexual behavior. ... Some combine this silence on the subject with Jesus' embrace of sinners and emphasis on love and conclude that Jesus would not have criticized responsible and loving expressions of homosexual and lesbian contact." [*The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, p. 185-6]

B. Simple Assertion: Jesus Never Directly Addressed Homosexuality

1. This is true... but what do we make of that?

2. Why should we assume, given the overwhelming evidence of clear opposition to homosexuality in Jewish society in Jesus' day, that silence meant Jesus would have overturned all these convictions?

C. Four Key Factors

1. Understood in the context of 1st century Judaism, it is very unlikely that Jesus would have adopted a fundamentally different stance on same-sex intercourse, especially given Jesus' basic approach to Mosaic Law
2. Jesus' appeal to Genesis 1:27 and 2:24 in his teaching on divorce confirms his embrace of an exclusively heterosexual model of monogamy
3. Jesus' position on other matters having to do with sexual ethics were generally *more*—not less—rigorous than those of his surrounding culture
4. The ways in which Jesus integrated demands for mercy and righteous conduct in his teaching and ministry do not lend support for the view that Jesus might have taken a positive or neutral approach to same-sex intercourse [Gagnon, p. 187]

D. One Key Text: Matthew 19

Matthew 19:3-9 Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?"⁴ "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,'⁵ and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'?⁶ So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."⁷ "Why then," they asked, "did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?"⁸ Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning.⁹ I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery."

1. Jesus answers a question on divorce by giving positive teaching about the true nature of marriage
 - a. Divorce is the death of a sick marriage
 - b. Jesus addresses the question by defining a healthy marriage
 - c. He deals with sin by establishing the true pattern
 - d. He would do the same with gay marriage as well
2. Scripture sufficient to answer every question concerning marriage: "Haven't you read"... [every word is God-breathed! Not just some of the text]

3. Marriage ordained by God... “from the beginning”
 - a. The same God who created the universe, and who created the human race made marriage
 - b. The same God who made marriage defines it and describes it at the beginning for all human history
 - c. Marriage the first human relationship... and the most significant!
 - d. The health or disease of a culture/nation (indeed of the world) connected to the health/disease of marriage
4. Gender is relevant to marriage
 - a. Jesus immediately discusses gender... God “made them male and female”
 - b. Gender is completely relevant to the question of marriage
 - c. This teaching by Jesus is so clear that it rules out male-male or female-female marriage
5. Genesis 1 and Genesis 2
 - a. Genesis 1 is the big picture and the equality of the sexes as both in the image of God
 - b. Genesis 2 is the detail of marriage... how a husband and wife should relate
 - c. The timeless command from Genesis 2:24

Genesis 2:24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.
6. Marriage is “two becoming one flesh”
 - a. Jesus says it twice... emphasizing it... “So they are no longer two but one”
 - b. The sexual side is clearly in view with the words “one flesh”
7. Jesus’ clear command: “What God has joined together, let man not separate”
 - a. God makes marriages
 - b. Humans don’t have the right to sever what God has joined
 - c. In the same way, humans don’t have the right to redefine marriage to suit desires

8. Ethical note: The church's weak recent history on divorce has led to a slow eroding of biblical teaching on marriage in general
 - a. It is hypocritical for the church to be vigorously against gay marriage, but tolerant of unbiblical divorce
 - b. Upholding true biblical standards of marriage in general is the best approach to this specific issue of gay marriage

E. Jesus' General Teaching on Sexual Morality

Matthew 19:9 I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery."

Matthew 15:18-20 the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man 'unclean.' ¹⁹ For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. ²⁰ These are what make a man 'unclean'; but eating with unwashed hands does not make him 'unclean.'"

II. Old Testament Teaching on Homosexuality

A. The Account of Sodom and Gomorrah... and of Judges 19

Genesis 19:4-7 Before they had gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom-- both young and old-- surrounded the house. ⁵ They called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them." ⁶ Lot went outside to meet them and shut the door behind him ⁷ and said, "No, my friends. Don't do this wicked thing.

Judges 19:22-23 While they were enjoying themselves, some of the wicked men of the city surrounded the house. Pounding on the door, they shouted to the old man who owned the house, "Bring out the man who came to your house so we can have sex with him." ²³ The owner of the house went outside and said to them, "No, my friends, don't be so vile. Since this man is my guest, don't do this disgraceful thing.

B. Two Key Passages in the Mosaic Law

Leviticus 18:22-23 "Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable. ²³ "Do not have sexual relations with an animal and defile yourself with it. A woman must not present herself to an animal to have sexual relations with it; that is a perversion.

Leviticus 20:13 "If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads.

1. Leviticus 17-26 generally called the “Holiness Code” for Israel... defining a life separate from the pagans and pure from wickedness
2. Leviticus 18:22 occurs in a larger context of forbidden sexual relations that primarily outlaws incest, but also adultery, child sacrifice, and bestiality
3. The degree of revulsion associated with the homosexual act is suggested by the Hebrew word translated “abomination,” “an abhorrent thing,” “something detestable, loathsome, utterly repugnant, disgusting” indicating a conspicuous violation of boundaries set up by God
4. The penalty is extreme: death (Leviticus 20:13)
5. The laws are unqualified and absolute; they neither penalize only oppressive forms of homosexuality, nor excuse either party to the act

C. The Modern Relevance of Mosaic Law

1. “Aren’t Christians being inconsistent when they quote part of Leviticus as though it were still binding, but leave out other parts?”

Ben Cohen, “The Banter Blog”: April 29, 2013

Article title: “ESPN’s Chris Broussard is a Homophobe and a Bigot Whether He Likes it Or Not”

“It is almost certain Broussard ignores 90% of the gibberish in Leviticus, and for good reason. It has absolutely nothing to do with the way we live our lives now. We eat juicy steaks. People who cheat on their spouses aren’t condemned to die. As a society, most of us have progressed as we learn more about ourselves and our natural world. We now know that homosexuality is not unnatural – it has existed in every human society on the planet throughout history, and within other species. It does not harm anyone and we know it doesn’t encourage others ‘to become gay’. So we move on. Unless that is, you harbor your own prejudices that lead you to pick and choose biblical laws according to your particular tastes.

And that is exactly what Broussard is doing. Although he may not understand it, he is a homophobe and a bigot. Why? Because he has been highly selective in his Biblical beliefs. Should he take to the airwaves and denounce ribeye steaks, he’d have a leg to stand on. But he hasn’t, and we can only conclude he opposes Jason Collin’s lifestyle because deep down, it is something his own masculinity is incapable of coming to terms with.”

2. Example: eating shrimp!!

Leviticus 11:9-12 *"Of all the creatures living in the water of the seas and the streams, you may eat any that have fins and scales. ¹⁰ But all creatures in the seas or streams that do not have fins and scales-- whether among all the swarming things or among all the other living creatures in the water-- you are to detest. ¹¹ And since you are to detest them, you must not eat their meat and you must detest their carcasses. ¹² Anything living in the water that does not have fins and scales is to be detestable to you.*

3. The relationship between the New Covenant and the Old Covenant is complex, with a great deal of discussion in the NT
4. Jesus upheld the Mosaic law completely, but also said he came to fulfill it

Matthew 5:17-19 *"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸ I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. ¹⁹ Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*

5. The central teaching of the Law of Moses is eternally binding on Christians and fulfilled by the work of the Spirit in our lives

Matthew 22:36-40 *"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" ³⁷ Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."*

Romans 8:4 *...in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.*

6. Some laws have been called “ceremonial”, mostly centered around the animal sacrificial system... the Book of Hebrews makes it plain that these have been fulfilled in Christ and are now obsolete

Hebrews 8:13 *By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear.*

7. The “circumcision question” is addressed clearly in Acts 15 and Galatians; Gentile converts no longer need to be circumcised and required to obey the laws of Moses generally in order to be saved

Galatians 6:15 *Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation.*

8. Jesus declared all foods clean... so the dietary laws have been fulfilled

Mark 7:18-19 "Don't you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him 'unclean'? ¹⁹ For it doesn't go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body." (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods "clean.")

9. All the unusual requirements of dress and hair etc. were intended to set the Jews apart until the Messiah came... they've been fulfilled

10. But the "moral laws" (so-called) including murder, adultery, fornication, idolatry, and many others are clearly still binding on us

11. We are called on to be discerning as we read the OT, and especially the Mosaic Law