

Chapter 4.

Creative Sexuality

Men and women are different, and we have bodies to prove it! No amount of ingenuity can conclusively rearrange the evidence for our physiological differences. We are biologically, emotionally and spiritually equipped for different and distinctive roles. Thus, we have certain norms, or what Margaret Mead terms "cultural universals" in society, resulting from what is fundamentally true to human nature. While exceptions do exist, almost invariably the mother is the principal caretaker of the child and the male is the breadwinner.

It is not my purpose to amass supportive evidence to prove or disprove cultural adaptation. However, according to *Time* magazine, March 20, 1972, "Recent research hints there may even be sex differences in the brain, which may be 'masculinized' by 'testosterone' before birth." Research indicates boy and girl babies follow a pattern of objective-subjective differences in their reactions to geometric figures vs. photographs of faces, the boys responding to objective stimuli, the girls to subjective. Study after study point to major differences between the sexes in aggression vs. spatial ability."

Personality differences are detectable at remarkably early ages, and tests have substantiated similar differences in monkeys and baboons. In the same issue of *Time* magazine, the conclusion is that these observable differences "force us to consider the possibility that some of the psychological differences between men and women may not be the product of experience alone but of subtle biological differences."

For about two decades there has been a notable reluctance to acknowledge these and later confirming studies, by a media accommodating to radical feminists. Lately, however, this data is being regarded as an ally to support the supposition that women are superior to men. (So much for the claim to be seeking equality!)

However we may wish to deny it, the issue of our sexuality is decidedly emotional, which in itself substantiates that we are psycho-sexual beings. Secular investigation, however intent on objectivity, tends to serve the purpose of the investigator, with data manipulated toward a biased end.

The Book of Genesis is one of the earliest records of sexuality. It is likely therefore to be culturally unbiased, pristine, and radical (the dictionary defines radical as "of or from the root; fundamental; basic"). For the Christian, to whom God is both Truth and Love, it is a true and loving definition of who we are. God does not waste his design, as his orderly and intricate creation affirms. He did not give to the masterpiece of his creation a male-female design without purpose, and we may be sure that this purpose is in harmony with the whole of his creative design.

In the world of nature there are countless expressions of what might well be labeled "masculinity-femininity." The existence of a creation presupposes a Creator, to whom the creation would be subject. This relationship of dominance and subjection characterizes a "masculinity-femininity" principle. To illustrate, consider the response of the tide to the force of gravity; the response and dependency of all green plants to the energy of light; the moon's reflection of the glory of the sun; and the nucleus around which the electron revolves. Our language reflects this principle in many ways. For example, we speak of the sun as masculine, whose energy in the form of light produces vegetation in "mother earth."

From this perspective, God the Creator can be thought of as masculine in relation to his creation and his creation as feminine in relation to Him. The Genesis text tells us that mankind was created in the image of God. It is this unique image which distinguishes us from the animal world. We share with our Creator

self-awareness, the capacity for rational thinking, and the ability to moralize and be creative. This equips us for making moral choices, and to have dominion over all the earth. Our dominion, however, is according and subject to the sovereign authority and the character of the Creator-God. It is therefore intended to be dominion which is benign, caring, preserving and enhancing. This serves to characterize the intent for our mutual humanity.

It seems entirely reasonable to infer from our biological distinctives that it is our Creator's intent to use those differences for the purpose of imaging (not imagining!) facets of his own Being, since the biblical account makes clear we were created in his image. It is certainly unarguable that throughout the scriptures God is referred to as our Father. He is indeed the Initiator of life, the Provider who both allows us to make moral choices and assumes ultimate responsibility for our choices. The price paid for our rebellious choices was his redemptive initiative! In the highest theological (God-related) sense, biology does give significance to our human destiny, and, conversely, God's highest purpose for our humanity gives the deepest meaning to our biological distinctives.

The Father-God is the ultimate paradigm for the role of the father in the family unit. Without the biblical Patriarch the male is left to his own ego interpretation of his function as a father. Lacking the elaborate biological involvement of the mother in the reproductive process, and outsider to the intimacy of gestation and lactation, the male can, and too often does, become renegade. The father who sees the responsibility and privilege of godliness, allowing the Father-God to shadow image his Fatherhood (masculinity) through his maleness, will find fulfillment and joy in his human role, or function.

In the human reproductive process, the male introduces the sperm into the ovum, where it is received, and nurtured to fruition by the female. If indeed there is a shadow image of God's character in the man, a complementary female role imaging God's loving nurture would appear not only logical but necessary to the fulfillment of God's purpose for creating us in his image, male and female.

Following this perspective, the essential element in maleness is the concept of masculinity: the sovereign, loving authority of God as he relates to his people. The complement of femininity in femaleness is the willing, reverential, responsive subjection of his people to that authority. Each is equal in value. Both are equally necessary to complete the portrait. Their value derives from their mutual purpose: making God known to His creation. Here we are on planet earth, staged as the principle players in God's cosmic self-disclosure! How can we see anything less than the highest human dignity in that divine partnership!

Why, then, did God define our humanity as male-female? Once again, it would appear that this is a miniature portrayal, a microcosm, of the larger principle of masculinity-femininity. Thus, male authority is a shadow image of God as sovereign over his creation, while female responsive subjection illustrates the appropriate attitude toward that authority. The necessary caution here is the reminder that male dominance must not violate the female privilege/responsibility of moral choice, since that is basic to her humanity. Nor does the dominant authority role indicate superiority, since each function is a necessary component to imaging the character of God.

There is no value in a coerced subjection nor in a pretense of supportive serving. The Lord sees the heart! Nothing short of godly leadership is honoring to God. And nothing less than submissive serving which is done "as unto the Lord" fulfills God's intent. Where this is violated, the image of God is distorted and God's character misrepresented in our roles. It is not a matter of fine-tuning our functions to look good and feel good or to buy favor with God or with people. Our distinctive roles only fulfill God's purpose when reflecting Spirit-filled, Spirit-directed obedience to our Lord, who at all times submitted to the will of his Father. It is that submission to the Father's will that brings joy and fulfillment. THAT is the bottom line to the whole notion of mutual submission!

Neither function is fulfilled in self-promotion, and God's design and purpose are denied in any and all power struggles. Human relations will truly represent God's character as they reflect the perfect unity and harmony in the Triune Godhead. This rules out competition and comparisons.

Thus, we may view ourselves as intricately woven into the universal fabric of masculinity-femininity, the

Creator-God's vast, inscrutable master plan in which he invests the incomparable beauty of his own character in the universe. There is an exhilarating excitement in being caught up in the magnitude of the Creator's plan. We must cry out with the Apostle Paul:

"O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor? Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid? For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen" (Romans 11:33-36).

It is a liberating experience to see oneself from this perspective, to be relieved of the confining minutia of self-centered demands. Such a perspective removes the vexing frustration of trying to out-wit, out-maneuver, and second-guess our circumstances and relationships.

Our sexuality can be a cesspool of hostility, anxiety, destructive tension, guilt, and frustration a tyranny which robs us of the glory of our humanity. But God meant it for good! To us, as sexual beings, God has entrusted the incredible privilege and responsibility of telling his story, painting his portrait, describing his character, for the entire universe to see. The truth about God, and ourselves, sets us free. The truth is that he is the initiator and we are the responders. He is the initiator of life, of love, of truth: "We love, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). Jesus said of himself: "I am the way, and the truth and the life" (John 14:6). In his nature, in his life, and in his word, truth and life eternally exist. In choosing to respond to Jesus Christ, we acknowledge him as the initiator of life, truth, and love, and these verities can only be defined in terms of who he is.

He is the Giver and we are the receivers. He is the Shepherd and we are the sheep. He is the Redeemer and we the redeemed. He is the Lover and we are the loved. The purpose of our sexuality is to tell the story of God's romance with his people. Man and woman are the climax of God's design in which he is telling over and over the ways in which he relates with loving authority to his creation.

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