

1. The Two-Gendered Image of God: Honoring the Other in Gender Distinction

- a. Purpose: We do not want to be ignorant of God’s Word
 - i. “I want you to know” (*pft inf*):
 - ii. Only other place used in Colossians 2:1 – “for I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and those in Laodicea...”
 1. Also similar, Phil 1:12 “I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has served to advance the gospel...”
 2. Different words, but synonymous and a similar form (1st person present with simple present infinitive)
 - iii. It seems to be particularly instructive on an issue that was previously unknown
 1. Thus, this is not something that the Corinthians were being reminded of, but rather initially instructed about. They were ignorant, not contentious.
 2. This is why it is in the “commendable” context of v2, while the Lord’s Supper is introduced as “not commendable” (v17ff)
- b. Premise 1: The Christ is the head of every man
 - i. This is a universal truth
 1. It does not depend upon whether or not a man submits to Christ or whether or not a man admits that Christ is the Head, it is a truism that Christ simply IS the head of every man
 2. One day all will confess this truth (“at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that He is lord to the glory of God the Father”)
 - ii. It is also the case that whatever “head” means (source or authority), this relationship defines and determines its usage by Paul in this context.
 1. Thus, it could be said that Christ is the source of every man, but this would depart from the normal relational term used of Christ in creation, which is agency, “through”, and the Father as the source (see 8:6, John 1:10)
 - a. In fact, every usage of “head” in reference to Christ is about authority/rule, Provider, not source (Eph 1:22; 4:15; Col 1:18; 2:10,19)
 2. What is “authority” from a biblical perspective?
 - a. Is the right and responsibility to exercise power for the flourishing of life of those under one’s responsibility
 3. Therefore, the likely usage of “head” in this context is that of authority, as Christ is the authority over man
 - a. It’s also why Paul refers to the head covering symbol as “authority” in v10
 - b. This does not imply that he is not the head of woman or children or creation
 - c. It’s emphasis is on the similarity of relationship between Christ/Man and Man/Woman and God/Christ.
 - iii. Also, the ESV translates the words “man” and “woman” here as “husband” and “wife” b/c they are the same word in Greek.
 1. The context, I believe, is not limited to the familial relationship of marriage, but rather to the public community of the Church
 - a. 3-16 honoring one another within the church through gender distinction
 - b. 17-34 honoring one another within the church through the Lord’s Supper
 - c. 12 honoring one another through honoring all gifts as equally necessary, significant, and valuable
- c. Premise 2: Man the head of woman
 - i. Note, first, that the word “every” is not in this phrase
 - ii. Just as the above is true, so also is this a true statement of what God has designed in Creation, the way things are supposed to be
 1. That is why Paul appeals not to culture, but to the pre-fall Creation account
 2. Roles of authority and self-subjection are both godly (see the next phrase relating to God the Father and God the Son) Creation principles which are endemic to humanity and written into what it means to be the image of God

3. God has imaged Himself in “male and female He created them in His image” (Genesis 1:27; 5:2)
 - a. Thus, God’s image is two-gendered, mutually honoring through authority and submission (Marriage is an icon of this image)
- iii. This principle of gender distinctions within the human experience are what God has designed, and our apprehension or approval of them are unnecessary to determine their truth and significance as that which brings human flourishing
 1. They are right and good and true because God has designed us to work in this way
- iv. We must remember the previous determination that God’s Word defines and describes total Truth for us (v2 is necessary to remember)
 1. We struggle with this principle for four primary reasons:
 - a. Our culture is one of radical *sameness*, with no distinction, a neutrality and interchangeability of *everything* (which is why a socialist is so popular with millennials)
 - i. The great irony of “diversity” is that it makes everyone the same
 - ii. Rather than value the differences created by God between male and female, there is an outright hatred of the distinction and a concentrated effort to eliminate them in practical usage
 1. This goes so far as to alter the physical body because gender is seen as a *feeling* with no value outside personal experience
 2. Ironically, this is based upon a feeling of presumed distinction between the genders that is not merely biological
 - b. We *demand* righteousness
 - i. We struggle with the concept of subordinating ourselves to those who are unworthy
 - ii. Men have not always had women’s best interests in mind, and this failure gives pause to such submission as a good and godly principle
 - c. We *demand* competence
 - i. We struggle with the concept of subordination to those who are less functionally competent than us
 - ii. We struggle to subordinate ourselves to anyone whom we believe, and often rightly so, to be less morally competent than us
 - d. We **overvalue authority and undervalue humble self-subjection**
 - i. Even when we submit joyfully to an authority, we tend to place good leaders on a pedestal, as more valuable
 - ii. Yet, what we see in the very nature of God, is that He is not only powerful authority, but also humble submitter
 - iii. This characteristic of God makes submission *equally glorious and equally significant and valuable* as authority/ rule
 2. This isn’t only true in regards to the gender distinction spoken of here, but also of any place where the Scriptures tell us to show honor to authority *even when they are incompetent or evil*
 - a. Slaves submit to masters, showing honor and not pilfering (1 Tim 6:1)
 - b. Citizens submit to Caesar, honoring the King (1 Pet 2:13-17)
 - c. Children submit to parents, honoring as they would the Lord (Col 3:20)
 - d. All of these examples are examples of ontological equality (equally human, equally image-bearers, in Christ equally, see Galatians 3:27-29, all heirs of God in Christ with equal heirship)
 - i. Therefore, men are not more God’s heirs than women, with some kind of double inheritance – all are equal heirs
 - ii. Masters are not more heirs than slaves, or kings to citizens, or parents to children
 - iii. Yet we struggle to submit in these relationships *when we cannot validate the worthiness of the authority*
 3. This is where we must compare our assumptions to Jesus Christ, the Word of God
 - a. Christ Jesus *submitted Himself* to damned sinners (John 19:11)

- i. He *entrusted* Himself to the Father (1 Peter 2:23)
 - ii. He did not *entrust* Himself to Man (John 2:24), because he knew the hearts of men, but He submitted to them b/c of the Father's will
 - b. Christ Jesus submitted Himself to those less competent than Himself
 - c. Christ Jesus submitted Himself to those who, frankly, didn't have His best interest at heart nor were morally or existentially superior to Him (Phil 2:3-11, "count others as *having authority over you...*" v3)
- 4. How did Jesus do this?
 - a. He trusted the Father that He would raise Him up and would glorify Him – would answer for Him
 - b. He cried out to the Father when treated unjustly so that He would answer His enemies with truth and love – He prayed often!
 - c. Ultimately, he knew that entrusting himself to those authorities which the Father had placed over Him for the time, was actually entrusting Himself to the authority of the Father, and that was His comfort and His joy (Psalm 31:5-7)
 - d. Thus, He entered in to love those around Him, even His enemies.
- d. Premise 3: God is the head of Christ
 - i. The Trinity relationship between the Father and the Son is the key to understanding the value, glory, and honor of both authority and submission in human life and flourishing
 - 1. Since Paul appeals to the relationship between members of the Triunity of God, namely the God the Father and God the Son, then it is clear that he does view the gender roles described here as merely cultural nor as a result of the Fall
 - 2. It is also clear that, because of the doctrine of the Trinity of God, namely that God the Father, Son, and Spirit are co-equal in essence (ontological equality), yet subordinate in roles of authority/submission (functional distinction), then there is also ontological equality between genders even as there is functional distinction regarding roles of authority/submission (*Imago Dei* – Image of God)
 - a. The point is that just as the Father and Son are equal in *godness (deity, ontological)*, so male and female are equal in *humanness*, with all the significance, value, glory, and image-bearing consistent with what it means to be human and heirs of God
 - b. It is also true that just as the Father honors (glorifies) the Son in humility, so the Son *honors (glories in)* the Father's authority, so also men are to glorify women in humility, and women to *honor* men, not because of any intrinsic inferiority or lesser competence, any more than Christ is less competent or capable than the Father (he is not), but rather because that self-submitting honor images and reflects the other-honoring triune God.
 - c. Therefore, a woman's honor is likened unto the honor of Christ Himself, and is thusly glorious and beautiful and flourishing in God-like beauty
 - ii. It also seems that Paul places the phrase, "and God is the head of Christ", right after "man is the head of woman" so as to emphasize that man is not superior to woman, nor is man without accountability as to how he exercises the authority expected of him.
 - 1. That is, man must answer to Christ as his authority
 - a. And even though Christ submits to the Father, it does not follow that Christ is inferior in essence, value, significance, glory, or beauty, etc.
 - b. Thus man must view, consider, and treat woman as of equal essence, value, significance, glory, beauty, and import.
 - c. Also as the Father glorified the Son, so also is man to glorify woman (John 17:1) and woman glorify man.
 - 2. As Christ is the submitter to the Father, Man's treatment of Woman as the submitter is His treatment of Christ Jesus (analogically)
 - 3. It appears that Paul anticipates chauvinism here and immediately speaks to contradict it

2. We are all called to bear God's image of humble self-subjection and honor of those in authority
 - a. Man subjects himself to Christ's authority (*right and responsibility* to rule)
 - i. Therefore, every man is to be a submitter, too
 - ii. In this, and in imitation of Christ Jesus, men are called to humble themselves and submit to the words and commands of Christ Jesus *for the honor of Christ*.
 - iii. Paul links this submission to honor – seeking to honor one's head is the godly, i.e. God-like, desire, intent, and behavior that images God
 - b. Woman subjects herself to Man's authority (*right and responsibility* to rule)
 - i. This is more about *honoring* than about mere "submission", as one honors Christ
 - ii. Paul connects "glory" (honor) between woman and man
 1. Woman is man's honor, his glory, in the same way that the Church is Christ's honor
 2. Man is glorified by woman's flourishing in life
 - a. This is how Christ is glorified and how God is glorified, too
 - iii. This is why men are supposed to seek women's glory (as Christ does the Church) and why women are to seek men's honor (as Christ does the Father)
 1. Do you seek your brother's honor, dear sister? Are you working to see him glorified in Christ-like dependency and God-honoring life and flourishing?
 2. Do you seek your sister's glory, dear brother? Are you working and using your strength and power to see her know the Lord and exercise her gifts for the strength and glory of the Church, and therefore of Christ Jesus?
 3. Thusly, Paul concludes this section by showing that every man is dependent upon woman and every woman dependent upon man, and all things come from God! (v11-12)
 - a. This truism is placed last limit the foreseen possibility that men would abuse their image-bearing authority and women would reject their image-bearing submission in corporate worship
 - b. We are all equally dependent upon God and *one* in Christ.
 - c. **God does not need us to be strong – He calls us to be faithful.**
 - iv. The immediate Corinthian context is particularly regarding "prayer and prophesy" in the *gathered* Church
 1. One way in which men may seek women's glory is to do all within our power to enrich their dependence upon God (prayer) and their proclamation of His Word (prophesy)
 - c. Christ subjects Himself to God's authority (*right and responsibility* to rule)
 - i. In the submission of Christ to God, Man and woman is glorified, *with Him* (Eph 5:27)
 - ii. This is the incredible union that God has, in is sovereign grace, bound us together with Christ Jesus: We are glorified in Him, with Him, through His submission to the Father
 - iii. In this same way, our roles of honoring one another are to image God according to the gender assigned to us by God, united for mutual glory

Thus, men and women are mutually bound together in interdependence as God's image-bearers, together bound with Christ who is in God, and so God is all in all (1 Cor 15:28). God is both authority and submitter, sender and goer, provider and dependor. Thus, there is mutual glory in each of these roles which our genders are, together, meant to reflect. This is why marriage is to be two-gendered, because it images God.

You see, we were designed, in our God-given genders, to image God by mutually honoring one another in these roles for the glory of God. That's the purpose of your gender. That's the reason you were made a man or a woman. Your gender is so much more than mere self-identification. There is divine purpose in it which is glorious and honorable, which delights God's heart and brings you joy. And in this divine purpose, there is mutual interdependence between the genders, for God is the giver of all of these functions (vv11-12). We need each other to image God rightly. So, honor one another. Seek one another's joy and glory and flourishing. We must not overvalue power or undervalue submission, for God is a submitter. To despise submission is to despise God. We must learn to truly value *godliness more than power*, the role of submission as *equally godly* as the role of authority, and neither role intrinsic to significance, so that we image God rightly to a world which is becoming progressively blinded to His transcendent beauty. So, this is the goal and the glory of our mutual interdependence in gender distinctions, in roles of honoring authority and roles of honoring submission: *that God would be seen, savored, and sung to with great joy.*