



Sunday Teaching Series | Term 2 2021

25 April	I am in the image of God
2 May	I am an embodied spirit
9 May	I am a sinner
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30 May	I am gendered
6 Jun	I am single or married

For the glory of Jesus, we build up each other and we reach out to the world, through God's word and prayer.

How to use these studies

This term we are doing “Systematic Theology” together. Systematic Theology is trying to summarise what the Bible says about a particular topic or theme. For example, in 2020 we looked at the themes of suffering and sovereignty. In 2021, we are looking at the “doctrine(s) of humanity” – ie what does the Bible say about being human?

3 things to keep in mind:

1. Studying “humanity” is vast and personal, so we will need to think hard, and be sensitive to how other group members are feeling. For example, in Study 7 we will explore implications of being single and married.
2. Systematic Theology is always about God (“theology” is the study of God) and his son Jesus. We might start by looking at a certain theme (“humans”), but we will end up thinking about even grander topics, like how Jesus is the perfect human, and how all the topics fit together in one cohesive worldview.
3. As we read lots of Bible passages in each study, keep in mind the “Biblical Theology” – ie how does this passage fit in the Bible’s big story. One simple way to approach each study is to first ask: how does this aspect of “humanity” unfold throughout the Bible? For example, with “I am fallen”: We were not sinful (Creation), We became sinful (Fall), The guilt for our sin is removed by Jesus (Redemption), and Our experience of sin will be removed in Jesus (New Creation).

Study 1 | I am in the Image of God

In this study, we are looking at how we relate to God as our Creator.

Getting started

Think about your extended family. Who do you most resemble? In what ways do you look, or act like them?

1. Created Image

Read Genesis 1:26-28.

- Quickly look over Genesis 1 - What is God like?
- Who is made in “God’s image”?
- What does it mean to be in God’s image?

Note: In some ways, being in God’s image is not defined here. But we can see humans are like God in terms of rule (v26,28) and relationships (v27b).

2. Broken Image

Read Genesis 3:14-19 & 23-24.

- To what extent is the image of God broken in the Fall?

Rule

Relationships

- To what extent does the image of God continue after the Fall? (Gen 9:1-7)

Rule

Relationships

3. Reconciled Image

Read Colossians 1:15-20.

- Who is the perfect image of God? Why?
- As the perfect image bearer, what did Jesus do for us?
- As the perfect image bearer, what does Jesus teach us about:

Rule

Relationships

- How does trusting in Jesus change us as image bearers (Col 3:8-14)?

Thinking it through

What's wrong with this sentence? *"I am trying to be good in order to be restored into the image of God."*

What of these truths has struck you most in this study?

We are made in the image of God.

We are broken images of God.

Jesus reconciles and restores us into the image of God.

John Calvin (*Institutes of the Christian Religion* 3.7.6) wrote about how to treat those who are made in the image of God. Do you agree? How does it challenge you this week?

Therefore, you have no cause to avoid anyone who stands before you and needs your service. Suppose he's a stranger. The Lord, however, has stamped him with his own mark (the image of God) that's familiar to you, and for that reason God forbid you to despise your own flesh. Suppose he is contemptible and worthless. The Lord however shows him to be one whom he has condescended to decorate with his own image. Suppose you owe him nothing for what he's done. But God – to whom you know you are obligated because of his many wonderful benefits to you – puts himself, as it were, in that person's place. Suppose he's unworthy of even your smallest labours for his sake. But the image of God, according to which this person is commended to you, warrants your giving of yourself and your all ...

We must be sure not to dwell on the wickedness of men, but rather to consider the image of God in them. That image, concealing end of alliterating their shortcomings, entices us by its beauty and dignity to love and welcome them."

Prayer

Build up: Sundays (Engadine 9am, 10:45am and Night Church, Heathcote), growth groups, personal Bible reading and prayer

Study 2 | I am an embodied spirit

*In this study, we are looking at the essence of who we are –
what are we made of?*

Getting started

Here's a tricky question: Are we made up of “body, soul and spirit” or “body and spirit”?

Think about being in the New Creation. What do you think you will look like?

1. What are we made of?

- Fill out the table.

Passage	What are humans made of?
Genesis 2:7 (Creation)	
Ecclesiastes 12:6-7 (Death)	
Deuteronomy 6:4-5	
1 Thessalonian 5:23	

- Is there a difference between “soul”, “spirit” and “heart”?

Psalm 73:26 (flesh & heart)

Matthew 10:28 (body & soul)

1 Corinthians 7:34 (body & spirit)

James 2:26 (body & spirit)

Note: We need to be careful with defining words, as some words can mean the same thing! Overall, the Bible says we are an “embodied spirit” – ie we have an inner being (spirit=soul=heart) in a physical body.

- We naturally see our physical body, but what proves that we have a spirit?

2. The embodied spirit after death

When we die, what happens to our body and spirit?

- Hebrews 9:27 (all people)
- Luke 23:36-43 (thief on the cross)
- Luke 24:36-43 (Jesus)
- 1 Corinthians 15:35-58 (all Christians)

Note: This is the most significant Bible chapter on the importance of the body and spirit. There’s lots of detail here, but what will we look like in the New Creation?

3. The embodied spirit now

- Summarise 1 Timothy 4:8 in your own words.

- How should we care for our body? (1 Timothy 4:8)

- How should we care for our spirit?
 - Hebrews 4:12
 - 1 Thessalonians 5:23
 - 1 Corinthians 16:18 (cf Hebrews 10:24-25)

- How does Jesus care for our body and spirit?

Thinking it through

What have you learnt about being an “embodied spirit”?

Why is this (slightly) wrong? *“In light of Jesus’ return, nothing matters except preaching the gospel.”*

If we are embodied spirits, what are the implications for our view of abortion and euthanasia? Does eternal life start from birth?

Prayer

Leadership across our church: Ministry team, MTS, Student ministers, Office staff, Growth group leaders, Wardens, Parish Council

Study 3 | I am a sinner

In this study, we look at what it means to be a sinner, even once we are a believer.

Getting started

What is “sin” and where did it come from?

1. Defining sin

From these passages, what is “sin”?

Genesis 3:1-7	Romans 3:9-18	Mark 7:20-23

2. The consequences of sin

Read Psalm 73:3-11, Isaiah 59:1-2; Romans 6:23

What are the consequences of sin, for this life and for eternity?

3. Jesus and sin

Read Romans 3:19-26.

- How does the law reveal the depth of our sin?
- How does Jesus redeem us from sin? (cf 8:3-4)
- When did Jesus die? (5:6-8)

4. Sin in the life of a believer

Someone claims, “*Jesus has forgiven my sin, so it doesn’t matter whether I sin or not.*”

Read Romans 6:1-14.

How does Paul correct them?

v2

v3-7

v8-10

How can we live out v11-14 this week?

When do you let sin reign? (v12)

Thinking it through

Ponder Romans 8:1-2: What word stands out to you?

Read these quotes from Charles Spurgeon.

“You shall be so cleansed, that not the shadow of a spot, nor the sign of a sin, shall be left upon you. When a man believes in Christ, he is in that moment, in God’s sight, as though he had never sinned in all his life . . . This is the most wonderful thing about the gospel. This does not take away part of our sin, but the whole of it; it does not remove it partially, but entirely; not for a little time, but for ever.” The Silver Trumpet (Sermon 366, MTP 7:151)

“As far as God is concerned your sin has ceased to be.” The Heart Full and the Mouth Closed (Sermon 1289, MTP 22:219)

When do you find it hard to believe this truth?

What is “total depravity”?

“[Total depravity] does not imply that we are as evil as we possibly can be, which would make us indistinguishable from demons; rather, no area or aspect of our nature is left intact by sin; we can point to no single area of our personality in order to claim moral self-justification ... sin has affected the very core of a person ... we are unable to save ourselves ... Total depravity implies ‘total inability’.” (Bruce Milne, Know the Truth, 2009 p141)

Stretch: Read Romans 7:14-25. This passage certainly resonates with our Christian experience of sin – ie we so often do what we don’t want to do and don’t do what we want to. But is that what Paul mean in context? See: <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/clarifying-romans-7-14-25-as-christian-experience>

Prayer

Reach out: 2233: mission partners, past members in full-time ministry (see list here: <https://www.eac.org.au/partners>)

Study 4 | I am a child of God

In this study, we are looking at how we relate to God as Father. This is the doctrine of “adoption” – what it means to be taken into God’s family as children and heirs.

Getting started

Do you know anyone who was adopted into their family?

In *Knowing God*, Jim Packer says: “[Adoption] is the highest privilege that the gospel offers: higher even than justification.”

Do you agree - why or why not?

Learning about adoption

- Divide into 3 mini-groups. Read your passage(s). What verse stands out to you? What do you learn about being a child of God?

Group 1: John 1:10-13 & 14:6-7 and Romans 8:15-17

Group 2: Galatians 3:26-4:7

Group 3: 1 John 3:1-10

- Report back to the whole group. Together, create a list or mind-map of what you have all learnt.

Now let's draw our thoughts together.

1. Receiving adoption

How do we become God's child?

John 1:12-13

John 14:6-7

Romans 8:14-16

Galatians 3:26, 4:4-5

1 John 3:1a

Thinking further: If Jesus is the one eternal son of God, how does faith in him make us all sons of God?

2. Adoption and future hope

- What blessing immediately flows from being a child of God? (Rom 8:17; Gal 3:29, 4:7)
- What does our inheritance involve? (Rom 8:17)
- 1 John 3:2 says that when Jesus appears "we will be made like him". What will our relationship be like with the Father?

Thinking further: How does the doctrine of adoption give us assurance for future hope?

3. Adoption now

- How does adoption motivate holiness? (1 Jn 3:2-3,10)

- If God is now our Father, who is in our family? (1 Tim 5:1-2) How does that affect how we think about other believers? (Gal 6:10)

Thinking it through

Discuss the following quote.

“[Adoption] is the highest privilege that the gospel offers: higher even than justification... That justification—by which we mean God’s forgiveness of the past together with his acceptance for the future—is the primary and fundamental blessing of the gospel is not in question. Justification is the primary blessing, because it meets our primary spiritual need. We all stand by nature under God’s judgment; his law condemns us; guilt gnaws at us, making us restless, miserable, and in our lucid moments afraid; we have no peace in ourselves because we have no peace with our Maker. So we need the forgiveness of our sins, and assurance of a restored relationship with God, more than we need anything else in the world; and this the gospel offer us before it offers us anything else... But contrast this, now, with adoption. Adoption is a family idea, conceived in terms of love, and viewing God as father. In adoption, God takes us into his family and fellowship—he establishes us as his children and heirs. Closeness, affection and generosity are at the heart of the relationship. To be right with God the Judge is a great thing, but to be loved and cared for by God the Father is a greater.”

J.I. Packer, Knowing God

Prayer

Thank God our Father for the privilege of adoption.

Study 5 | I am part of the church

In this study, we are looking at what it means to be part of God's cosmic church.

Getting started

In your own words, what is “church”?

1. God's cosmic plan

Read Ephesians 1:9-10, 1:22-23, 3:10-11.

In your own words, what is God's cosmic plan?

2. Who We Once Were

Read Ephesians 2:1-10.

- Paul reminds his readers of who they used to be and what they were like. How does he describe them? (v1-3)

- What changed? (v4-10)

- What has God prepared for us? (v10)

3. Who We Have Become

Read Ephesians 2:11-22.

- In the Old Testament, Jews and Gentiles couldn't even eat together (Acts 10:28). Fill out the table for Gentiles (with Jews).

Verses	Relationship before Jesus	Relationship in Jesus
v11-13		
v14-18		
v19-22		

- We may not have the same 1st century Jew / Gentile history, but “we have been brought near by the blood of Christ” (v13). In what ways can disunity show itself in churches? How do these verses motivate us to deal with disunity?

5. Being church together

Read Ephesians 4:1-16.

- How do we keep the ‘unity of the Spirit? (v1-3) What do you find hardest to do?
- Who has Christ given gifts to? (v7, v16)
- What is the purpose of all gifts given by Christ? (v12-13, v14, v15-16)
- What is at the heart of all the gifts? (v15)

Thinking it through

- We often ask “what is *my* spiritual gift?” How does Ephesians reform this question? What is a better question to ask?

If you have time: Read 1 Corinthians 12 and see what extra insight it brings about exercising our gifts.

- Write a list of ways we can “speak the truth in love” to each other this week (public and private, formal and informal). What stops us from doing it?
- Charles Spurgeon wrote, “*The day we find the perfect church, it becomes imperfect the moment we join it.*” How do we remain humble to see our own faults rather than blaming others? How do we keep seeing the “cosmic” nature of church (Isaiah 2:2-3) in a fallen world?

Prayer

Those who are struggling in our church, with chronic health, relationships, employment, mental health, addictions (eg Overcomers Outreach).

Homework for next week

Read the 1st article at the end of the studies. Note anything you have a question about.

Study 6 | I am gendered

In this study, we look at a topic which is causing huge confusion and long-term hurt in our society. We focus on what the Bible teaches about gender, which you might find confronting, but is ultimately liberating and makes sense of ourselves and our world.

Getting started (before you come to growth group)

“When it comes to gender, we live in confusing times. For many, gender has become merely a subjective reality. We are male or female because we perceive ourselves as such. As a result, we can alter our gender identity at will, because our perception of ourselves may change over time. In addition, gender is often viewed as socially constructed. We are male or female because we were raised as boys and girls according to certain stereotypes of what it means to be a boy or girl. But again, these stereotypes are changing, and so may our gender identity. Where do we turn in this age of rapidly increasing gender fluidity?”

[Read the rest of the article at the end of the studies.]

Our society tends to distinguish between the following:

- Biological sex = what sex I was born (my birth physiology/objective)
- Gender identity = what sex I currently choose to align myself with (psychological/subjective)
- Gender stereotypes = what society sees as masculine and feminine

Where have you seen a more fluid view of gender being introduced or expressed?

1. Men and Women in the Bible

As the world changes definitions, the Bible gives us a solid foundation to understand ourselves, while acknowledging that the Fall has deeply affected everything.

Fill out the following table.

Passage	What do learn about men and women?
Genesis 1:26-27	
Genesis 2:18-25	
Galatians 3:27-29	
1 Timothy 5:1-2	

Summarise what the Bible teaches about men and women.

Note:

1. The Bible does not distinguish between biological sex (physical) and gender identity (choice). In rare situations, people may experience gender dysphoria (an unrest between their biological sex and gender identity) or be born with intersex variations. These are complex situations that need to be dealt with sensitively.

2. The Bible celebrates the creation of men and women from its very 1st pages – as completely equal yet purposely different. We're going to look at how this plays out in the life of the church and the home. You may have lots of questions, especially if you are new to church! Feel free to ask!

2. Men and Women within the Church

We saw in Study 5 that Christ has gifted every Christian to build up the church. We need men and women serving together to become mature (Eph 4:15-16).

Read over Romans 16.

What do we learn about gender and ministry in the early church?

Read 1 Timothy 2:1-15.

- What is the purpose of these instructions? (See 3:14-15, 2:1-7)
- What are the specific instructions to men? (2:8) What stops men doing this?
- What are the specific instructions to women? (2:9-15) What stops women doing this?

Note:

1. The word “quietness” in v11-12 is counter-cultural to us, but the word “learn” would have been counter-cultural in Ancient Greece.
2. “Quiet” is not silence or suppression. It is tied to peacefulness. See the same word in v2.
3. In 1 Cor 11, both men and women pray and prophecy in the church gathering. Here 1 Tim 2 is talking about the teaching in the gathering, which is a responsibility given by God to male overseers (3:1-7).

What questions do you still have? You could email eac@eac.org.au.

2. Men and Women Within the Home

When the Bible talks about marriage, it often addresses husbands and wives separately. The instruction can be symmetrical (eg 1 Cor 7:1-5) or different (eg Gen 2:24, 1 Pe 3:1-7, Col 3:18-19).

Read Ephesians 5:21-33.

Verse 21 starts the section on submission in Christian households, which is then applied to marriage, parents, slaves and masters.

Jesus and the church are the model for how Christians are to relate in the context of marriage:

- What is the model for a wife's submission? What's the difference between submission and subjugation? Why is this distinction important?
- What is the model for a husband's sacrificial love? How does this relate to the Bible's more general command to love (5:1-2, Tit 2:4)?

Thinking it through

To ponder: The way Jesus sacrificially loved the church was by submitting to his Father. See Phil 2:6-8.

How could someone misuse the Bible's teaching on gender? What do we lose if we don't follow what the Bible teaches about gender?

Men and women are completely equal yet purposely different. Is that how you are relating?

Prayer

"Christianity maturity requires moving from reluctant acceptance to joyful obedience." (Richard Chin, AFES). Pray for God to help us to joyfully respond to his teaching on gender.

Study 7 | I am single or married

Most of the Bible's teaching is addressed to singles and marrieds together.

Here we look at the specific instructions.

Getting started

In general, what does society think about ...

Marriage	Singleness

The Bible's teaching on marriage

Read Ephesians 5:22-33.

- What is the purpose of marriage? (v31-32)
- How does marriage reflect Jesus' relationship with the church?
(recap from Study 6)
- How can sin affect a marriage?

What does Matthew 22:23-33 teach us about marriage in heaven?

The Bible's teaching on singleness and marriage

Read 1 Corinthians 7:25-40.

- What do we learn about:
Singleness (v25-27, v32, v34b, v35, v37, v38)

Marriage (v28, v29-31, v33-34a, v34c, v36)

- Why is singleness “better” in v38? (v29-31v34)

Thinking it through

How is the Bible's view of singleness and marriage different from society's view?

Purpose

Roles

Note: In your own time, read 1 Cor 7:1-16, and reflect on how the Bible's view of separation and divorce is different from society's view.

Both marriage and singleness are gifts from God (7:7)

What should a biblical marriage remind us of?

What should biblical singleness remind us of?

Watch: <https://www.livingout.org/resources/articles/69/marriage-as-a-trailer>

Prayer

Article 1: 5 Things to Avoid When Discussing the Bible's Teaching on Gender

Authors: Andreas J. Köstenberger, Margaret Elizabeth Köstenberger
<https://www.crossway.org/articles/5-things-to-avoid-when-discussing-the-bibles-teaching-on-gender/>

An Important Conversation

When it comes to gender, we live in confusing times. For many, gender has become merely a subjective reality. We are male or female because we *perceive ourselves* as such. As a result, we can alter our gender identity at will, because our perception of ourselves may change over time. In addition, gender is often viewed as socially constructed. We are male or female because we were *raised* as boys and girls according to certain stereotypes of what it means to be a boy or girl. But again, these stereotypes are changing, and so may our gender identity.

Where do we turn in this age of rapidly increasing gender fluidity? Arguably, the answer is God's word. But even here Christians don't always agree on how to understand the biblical teaching on gender.

Here are 5 cautions for you to consider when discussing the Bible's teaching on gender:

1. Avoid looking at the biblical teaching on gender *piecemeal*.

In previous decades, many biblical scholars have studied *individual passages* of Scripture on men and women, interpreting each in a way that favoured particular presuppositions. They reinterpreted conventional readings on a case-by-case basis, resulting in a cumulative case made up of weak links that ultimately made for a less than persuasive case overall.

Increasingly, in recent years, biblical scholars have been discovering the importance of understanding a given passage in light of the larger storyline of the Bible. In our recent book on the subject ([crossway.org/books/gods-design-for-man-and-woman-tpb/](https://www.crossway.org/books/gods-design-for-man-and-woman-tpb/)), we try to show that the overall story of Scripture, and God's design for man and woman in particular, is wonderfully consistent and coherent. Our understanding of this design doesn't just rest on interpreting only one passage but reflects the cumulative picture painted by Scripture as a

whole. Even if we didn't have 1 Timothy 2:12 in our Bibles, we'd still find the same pattern of male leadership and male-female partnership that is characteristic of God's plan for man and woman from the beginning! We see the same pattern throughout Old and New Testament times.

We believe this emphasis on biblical theology is a unique contribution we are able to make to the body of literature on this topic when most volumes contain individual chapters devoted to key passages that do not connect the theological "dots" between these passages. With this in mind, we've set out to trace the theme of God's design for man and woman through Scripture.

2. Be careful not to embrace the idea that male leadership is merely a *result of the Fall*.

The apostle Paul didn't think so. Among other things, when he wrote "I don't permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man," he grounded his directive in the fact that the man was created *first*, and then the woman (1 Tim. 2:12–13). In other words, the man's leadership is shown to be embedded in God's creation design, *preceding* the Fall. That's the way Paul read the Genesis narrative, especially chapter 2, and while he only cited one aspect of it in 1 Timothy in support of his contention, there are several other indications of male leadership in Genesis 2 as well: the fact that the woman is created from and for the man (Paul's point in 1 Cor. 11:8–9); the fact that she is called the man's "suitable helper" (Gen. 2:18, 20); and the fact that the man *names* the woman in this inconspicuous but culturally significant act of leadership (Gen. 2:23).

Those who claim that the man assumes authority over his wife as a function of the subversion of God's original design *after* the Fall have not seriously taken into account the discussion of God's original purpose for gender given in Genesis 2 before the Fall and the New Testament references to Genesis 2 in support of sustaining the same pattern in the church as it awaits Christ's return.

3. Avoid equating *traditional* with *biblical* marriage.

Traditional marriage may be rooted in Christian teaching on marriage, but it is not the same as a truly biblical marriage. Traditional marriage is often described as some kind of division of labour, such as the man going to work and providing the family income, and the woman staying home, doing household chores, and taking care of the children.

However, biblical marriage goes much deeper than this kind of division of labour. It is based on a heart-felt embrace of God's good, wise, and beautiful design of male leadership and male-female partnership that can only be experienced by Spirit-filled disciples (Eph. 5:18). It is part of God's end-time purpose of bringing all things in this universe back under Christ's lordship (Eph. 1:10). In this way, the husband and wife witness to God the Creator and to Christ his Son who died on the cross to reconcile us to God. The two become one just as Christ and the church become one, as head and body (Eph. 5:31–32). There is unity, there is sacrificial love, but there is still authority. However, it's an authority that has the best interests of the other person at heart and is not simply a structured division of roles.

4. Recognize the limitations of compartmentalization when assessing the significance of God's design for man and woman.

In the evangelical world it has become quite common to compartmentalize issues into first-, second-, and third-level doctrines in order to distinguish between the core gospel message and ancillary issues. This is understandable and helpful for the most part, but it doesn't do full justice to our particular topic. Being male or female is a foundational and integral part of every person's existence. To relegate our sexual identity and roles to the periphery is inadequate.

While technically God's design for man and woman may not be a salvation truth, practically it is indispensable for every person to know and experience in order to live their lives as followers of Christ in this world, as beings created by God as male or female *by design and for a purpose*. Ultimately there may be implications for the salvation of souls in that the living out of our roles is an integral part of living on mission for God, especially in testifying to our great God who has a wonderful plan for the confused and struggling people in fractured relationships all around us.

5. Finally, avoid the *avoidance* of the topic of biblical manhood and womanhood in your church!

Don't be afraid to talk about it! True, the topic has often proved to be difficult and divisive in the past, so it's understandable if pastors and leaders shy away from penetrating and convicting teaching on the subject. Why would anyone want to antagonize those in their church who may differ with regard to what men and women may or may not do?

Avoiding the subject, however, may come with a hefty price tag: the loss of couples and families entering into a more profound understanding and deep maturing experience of how God designed them as men and women, learning how he wants them to relate to each other and to partner together by exercising their own unique and distinctive roles together on mission for God. This loss of the opportunity to tenderly attest to the God who created us according to his sovereign design may be considerable.

While we should be sensitive to the challenges we face in addressing this topic, we would also encourage each other and our church leaders to be bold and courageous, embracing the responsibility to teach people about God's design for man and woman!

Article 2: 10 Things You Should Know about the Bible's Teaching on Men and Women

Authors: Andreas J. Köstenberger, Margaret Elizabeth Köstenberger

<https://www.crossway.org/articles/10-things-you-should-know-about-the-bibles-teaching-on-men-and-women/>

1. We were created male and female by divine design.

According to the Genesis creation account, God created humanity male and female (Gen 1:26–28). Maleness and femaleness are creational, not contractual. They are divinely instituted rather than socially defined. Thus, our gender identity cannot simply be renegotiated the way in which we refinance a mortgage or reschedule an appointment. God created us, and we are his creatures, both men and women.

2. We were created male and female in God's image.

Humanity's binary gender design as male and female reflects in some mysterious way the nature of God. While sharing a common humanity, the man and the woman are unique and complementary rather than identical. This complementarity, in turn, reflects a facet of God's own nature. God, too, is a unity within diversity (three in one, equal in personhood, distinct in role). This unity in diversity is beautifully reflected in human marriage, where the two become one flesh (Gen 2:24–25).

3. The man was created first and given the responsibility to lead.

Scripture teaches that first the man was created by a direct divine act of creation and given the responsibility to lead; subsequently, the woman was created by God from the man (Gen 2:5–9) and for the man (Gen 2:18–20). He is to subdue the earth and is given the name "Adam," which also serves as the name of the entire human race. God calls the man to account and holds him responsible for the fall.

4. The man and the woman are partners in exercising dominion over God's creation.

The man and the woman jointly receive God's mandate to multiply and fill the earth, and to subdue it, exercising dominion. God creates the two as genuine partners, and this partnership envelops the man's leadership and the woman's support and participation in such a way that the two work in tandem, with

complementarity. This genuine partnership can be fully reflected today where men exercise godly leadership without domination and encourage women's robust participation within biblical boundaries.

5. Who we are as men and women defines the core of our existence, not merely its periphery.

Having been created male and female, we are husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters. Thus, the way in which we live our lives is in and through our divinely created gender identities. These gender identities, in turn, are not merely superficial but run deep, affecting who we are as persons, family members, church members, and citizens. While the gospel extends to all of us, we do not cease to exist as men and women.

6. The fall distorted, corrupted, and confused who we are as men and women.

Men and women are meant to live out gender diversity in unity. The fall destroys this prospect. Male and/or female domination are some of the extremes resulting from fractured gender relationships. It is only those redeemed in Christ who can hope to recover and live out God's intended design. We should remember that the ultimate problem is sin, not a faulty gender design or a corruption of a perfect original. That said, even in its fallen state humanity still displays glimpses of the divine design.

7. God's design is best.

God's design of humanity as male and female cannot be improved upon! God's ways are far superior to our own. God's design for man and woman—expressed in male leadership with male-female partnership—is an expression of his beauty, wisdom, and goodness. Through faith, and faith alone, we can appropriate God's power to live out this design individually and in relation to each other.

8. The Bible's teaching on God's design for man and woman is consistent and coherent.

From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible paints a unified picture of what it means to be a man or a woman. The dual pattern of male leadership and male-female partnership pervades all of Scripture: from creation to the fall to redemption in Christ and to the final consummation. For a thorough discussion of this, see our book *God's Design for Man and Woman: A Biblical-Theological Survey*.

9. Every generation must model and explain God's design for man and woman to the next.

God's way is for men to lead their families, fathers to mentor their sons in biblical, God-honouring masculinity, and for mothers to mentor their daughters in biblical, God-honouring femininity. Not only is this to happen in the natural family, it is also to take place in God's family, the church (e.g., Titus 2), especially where family structures are broken. How are you and I preparing our sons and daughters for living out their God-given design as men and women? How are our churches equipping those without role models?

10. Current cultural trends reflect humanity's brokenness and deep-seated rebellion against the Creator and his design for men and women.

Current cultural trends such as same-sex marriage or transgenderism are only symptoms—the result of humanity's rejection of its Creator (Romans 1). Autonomous, libertarian human reason insists on its right to define itself in opposition to and rebellion toward God. Sadly, this root rebellion will incur eternal judgment unless people trust in Christ. As believers, by grace and through faith, we have the privilege to point to God through living out his wise and beautiful design before a world that languishes in sin and desperately needs salvation.

Our Mission Partners

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" (Rom 10:14-15)

Karen in Dubai



Mal & Charissa Forrest in Jordan with Aiden, Sasha, Toby



Kurt & Bec Langmead in Lightning Ridge with June, Arthur, Lydia, Jeremiah



MTS

Tim (and Liv) Griffiths

Sam Begg - ANU Canberra