

“Woman in the Image of God”

Sermon Notes

- **Men and women are created by God - equal in value and dignity, yet different in role and responsibility**

**The creation of Adam makes clear that...*

1. Man is created by God as a provider and a protector (v.15)
2. Man reflects the image of God as a provider and a protector (vv.16-17)

**The creation of Eve makes clear that...*

3. Woman is created by God as a helper and a life-giver (vv.18-23; 3:20)
4. Woman reflects the image of God as a helper and a life-giver (vv.18-23)

Next Week: Genesis 2:24-25 - “Marriage and the Gospel of God”

MEFC Community Group Study Guide

For the week of August 31st-September 6th

In June of 2023, a statement was made public titled: [“Where We Stand in the EFCA: Denials and Affirmations”](https://www.efca.org/where-we-stand-in-the-efca-denials-and-affirmations). Though it bears no official authority for our movement as a whole, this document was approved by the EFCA Board of Ministerial Standing alongside the EFCA Board of Directors and bears the unanimous affirmation of each of the EFCA District Superintendents¹. In the document’s introduction, it states that:

“We believe that as an association of churches, we in the EFCA are bound together by the biblical gospel, and we seek to live in the unity which that gospel creates. We believe and practice, “In essentials unity; in non-essentials liberty; in all things, charity.” In that light, we seek to address social movements and cultural trends that can create division among us.

Just as Paul needed to explain and defend himself and his ministry (2 Cor 10-13), we, too, sense a need to explain the ministry the Lord has entrusted to us. Because of questions asked, concerns raised and criticisms made about or against the EFCA, which both prompted and limited the issues addressed, the Board of Directors and the Board of Ministerial Standing have adopted this declaration. The following statements are not meant to demonize or denigrate but are attempts to clarify where we in the EFCA stand as we seek to make the biblical gospel, and not any social movement, central among us.”²

One of the key cultural flashpoints of our day certainly includes the matter of the biblical teaching concerning manhood and womanhood. In the EFCA, we widely affirm and embrace the complementarian position regarding man as male and female (that men and women are equal in value and dignity, yet different in role and responsibility). Below, you

¹ While this statement is not an official declaration of the national conference or the denomination as a whole, it’s important to note that the moment President Kevin Kompelien finished reading the document for the first time publicly at the EFCA One national conference in Fullerton, CA in June of 2023, it was met with an immediate and overwhelming standing ovation from the more than 500 conference delegates present.

² <https://www.efca.org/where-we-stand-in-the-efca-denials-and-affirmations> . Accessed 8/30/25 @ 12:45pm.

will find the seventh bullet point (of eight) from our Denials and Affirmations statement followed by a theological commentary (the full commentary on all eight points can be found [here](#)) that seeks to unfold its meaning.

This week in your community group, read carefully through this statement and reflect on it together. What do you appreciate about the statement? What questions do you have about it? What concerns (if any) do you have upon interacting with it? As you do so, be sure to pray for our local church and the broader EFCA of which we are a part - that we would remain faithful to this vision as we seek to be grounded in the gospel of Jesus Christ and tethered to the text of Holy Scripture.

#7—We are not egalitarian³ in our understanding of the roles and functions of men and women in the church, but we do believe that the gifts and ministries of women are essential to the health and fruitfulness of churches and ought to be sought out and multiplied in ways that arise from and are consistent with our complementarian convictions, as reflected in our EFCA ordination policy⁴.

God, in his wisdom, created human beings in his image as male and female (Gen. 1:27). There is sameness in essence or being (ontology), since both are in the image of God, and there is distinction, since they are male and female. We believe this distinction in creation ought not to be ignored, but is significant and ought to be appreciated and valued.

The distinction between men and women can have no bearing on their oneness in Christ (Gal. 3:16-19) or on husbands and wives as

³ In distinction from the complementarian position, the egalitarian position holds that because men and women are equal in value and dignity, there ought to be no distinctions at all in terms of role and responsibility (in the home, in the church, and in society). If you recall from last week's sermon, we sought to address this issue noting that equality does not mean interchangeability.

⁴ Over the years, questions have arisen regarding the history of the Free Church with reference to the issue of women in ministry and women's ordination. In [this important article](#), David Gustafson and Greg Strand set the record straight regarding our complementarian convictions since the beginning of our movement. If you are interested in further reading on this topic, Gustafson and Strand have published a book-length treatment on these themes as well that can be accessed [here](#).

"fellow heirs of the grace of life" (1 Pet. 3:7). Both men and women are equally valuable as persons created in the image of God and as recipients of the grace of God in Christ (1 Cor. 11:11-12; Gal. 3:28).

Within the context of marriage, the Bible teaches that the husband has a role of headship, analogous to that of Christ toward the church. This role calls the husband to self-giving, sacrificial love toward his wife, in which he is to seek her welfare, and especially her spiritual well-being before God (Eph. 5:25-30; Col. 3:19; 1 Pet. 3:7). The appropriate response by the wife, and her responsibility, is submission to her husband (Eph. 5:22-24; Col. 3:18; cf. also 1 Pet. 3:1; Tit. 2:3-5).

Submission is not in any way degrading for the Christian (cf. 2 Cor. 9:13; 1 Tim. 2:11; 1 Tim. 3:4), for all believers are called to submit to others in various contexts (Eph. 5:21), including to governing authorities (Rom. 13:1; 1 Pet. 2:13,14) and to leaders within the church (Heb. 13:17). Jesus himself was submissive to his earthly parents (Luke 2:51), to the earthly authorities (John 19:10,11), and to his heavenly Father (Matt. 26:39; John 5:30; 6:38; Phil. 2:8).

It is challenging today to hear the word submission without negative connotations. At times submission has been hurtful, and forced submission is always destructive. However, our understanding and application of submission must be grounded in and guided by Scripture. God's divine design and order are "very good" (Gen. 1:31), and for all to submit joyfully to this truth is the God-ordained means by which we all flourish. It is the gospel alone that enables us to see this and empowers us to live it.

Submission in this larger context refers to a woman's worshipful learning in the context of the local church and under the authority of the elders/pastors, not to every man nor in every context (1 Tim. 2:11). One translation captures this notion: "Let a woman receive training in a quiet demeanor with complete respect for order." Even though this requires further explanation, it conveys submission to the biblical order of God's design for men and women that was universal in the churches (1 Cor. 14:33, 40).⁶ This human condition is described psychiatrically as gender dysphoria, i.e., gender distress.

The local church operates as a community modeled in some sense on the extended family household (cf. 1 Tim. 3:15; 5:1,2,16). The office of

elder/pastor reflects that of the husband/father in the family unit (cf. 1 Tim. 3:4-5). As shepherds of God's flock, these men have the primary responsibility for the spiritual oversight of the church family, including the proper teaching of the Word of God and protection from false doctrine. In the EFCA, ordination is the recognition by the broader church of a man's calling, character, and competence to fulfill this pastoral office and function.

Both women and men have important contributions to make to the church in corporate worship (1Cor. 11:4; 14:26), and in teaching and theological training (Acts 18:26; Tit. 2:1-15). The biblical limitation of women from "teaching or having authority over a man" in the context of instructions for Christian worship (1 Tim. 2:11,12) is not simply a cultural necessity limited in application to the particular circumstances of the church in Ephesus. Rather, this provision is grounded in the created order (2:13,14; cf. 1 Cor. 11:2-16) and assigns to the elders of the church the responsibility for doctrinal fidelity (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:5-9), reflecting the notion of male "headship" in the household. This principle is reflected in the EFCA policy of reserving ordination to qualified men, while qualified women are eligible for other ministerial credentials.

Women have always had a very important role in the life of the church as evidenced by the many references to women as fellow-workers in the gospel in the letters of Paul (cf., e.g., Rom. 16:1-15; Phil. 4:2-3; Acts 18:26), and in the history of the Free Church women have served in prominent roles as evangelists and missionaries. The contribution of women to the work of the church today cannot be overstated. We need all the gifts to be exercised according to God's divinely-given order in the church (1 Cor. 12; 14:40; 1 Pet. 4:10). Therefore, women as well as men need to be equipped and trained for gospel work, and the ministry of women in the church ought to be encouraged and appreciated.