

At this time in our history when transgenderism is the hot topic of the day, when teachers in public schools are actually promoting it and their confused, vulnerable students are having to suffer the tragic consequences of that abuse, it is important to re-examine the only two genders God has created, male and female, how distinct they are from one another and His wisdom in making them so. Let us start with the inspired teaching of Holy Scripture, then move on from there to the testimony of observed behaviour, and conclude, finally, with some guiding principles and practical application.

The Teaching of Holy Scripture

1. The first man (Adam) was created before the first woman (Eve) and he became the federal head of the whole human race. It was instructive to the man to be created first in order for him to learn how incomplete he was on his own, but this order was also necessary because, while the man was created from the dust of the ground, the woman was created from a rib of the man.
2. All creation, including the man and the woman, came into being by the word of God's power. The special manner of their unique creation, however, distinguishes the man and the woman from all other creatures. The man being formed from dust points to the humble beginning of all humanity, that mankind has nothing of itself to offer the Creator but is entirely dependent on the ongoing favour of God; and the woman being formed from a rib of the man points to the intended purpose of the female as the helper comparable to him.
3. This special manner of their unique creation distinguishes the man and the woman also from one another. The continuity and discontinuity between them go hand in hand. As male and female they are equal to each other as image-bearers of God, yet as Christ in His humanity on earth was subject to the will of His heavenly Father, so a wife is to be subject to her husband. They are united in marriage, making them one, and are meant to be heirs together of the grace of life, yet each is called to serve a different purpose from the other and they are equipped to function in complementary roles in order to support one another. In

particular, they are given different roles in procreation, yet both are needed to fulfill their mandate to multiply and fill the earth.

4. The woman is the weaker vessel physically and emotionally. This is not to say that every woman is weaker in these ways than every man, no, but it is true as a general principle. Nor is this principle suggestive of something defective in the female, but is the very reason why many women make better mothers than men ever would. The man is less physically attractive than the woman, yet many men make better fathers than women would. Indeed, if we examine all their differences, and weaknesses particularly, it soon becomes apparent why men and women need each other and should undertake to support one another.

The Testimony of Observed Behaviour

The following points are gleaned from years of marriage and family counselling, both my own and others, yet they are worth noting and help to demonstrate why the God-given order for marriage is to be heeded carefully.

1. It needs to be remembered, as noted above, that men and women are wired differently, that they both need to recognize and appreciate these differences, that each brings to the table what the other does not have and thus it is that they can help to complete one another if they are committed to doing so.
2. A man, typically, will focus on the importance of abilities and finding solutions to problems, whereas a woman will focus on the importance of feelings. A man can easily dismiss feelings, thinking that they lead too quickly to irrational behaviour; a woman can just as easily discredit abilities and planned problem-solving, assuming that they reveal insensitive aggression. When each takes up the needs of the other, however, one's own needs, now being met, begin to fade into the background, and each finds increasing fulfillment in serving the other.
3. A man will value results, whereas a woman will value intentions. A man will want to provide for his children, whereas a woman will want to protect them. The list goes on and on. Some differences, such as this last point, will appear much more subtle than others, yet these differences are significant and can have great practical value in how we live our lives and conduct ourselves socially. But if a husband loves his wife, he will soon learn to care for her as she requires and accept the true value of these different contributions she has to make – a loving

wife, in turn, will come to appreciate his care for her and learn to support him, to be that helper comparable to him – and this will establish a pattern of giving, not taking, which will draw them ever closer together and bind them tighter than ever before in their life-long relationship.

4. Love changes over time, what began as youthful bliss can blossom into a more mature form of love, but husband and wife must commit to each other and to God's laws for their marriage if they are to see that happen.

Guiding Principles and Practical Application

1. Marriage is not for two men, nor for two women, nor for just any number of people together, but for one man and one woman who unite together as one.

2. Since marriage is intended to be a life-long bond, let each consider carefully who that wife or husband should be well in advance of getting engaged. Ask the vital questions, "Is she/he prepared to meet my needs? Am I willing to meet hers/his?"

3. While marriage is for everybody, believers and unbelievers, let the Christian marry only in the Lord – that is, another Christian – and let each believer fully commit, not only to the other, but as well to the union that has been established to make them one. This is God's own doing, after all, and He is most honoured when what He has done is not cast asunder.

4. Let the husband honour his wife, and let the wife respect her husband. This is a partnership they have, and the blessing which is intended to come of it can appear only if they are prepared to work together and in the best interest of the other until death should separate them. Let them live for each other, not for their children, but prepare their children for their own marriage in time to come.

5. Remember, by God's own design children are uniquely male or female as well. Gender dysphoria was once recognized as a mental illness, one that could be treated with counselling and was usually cured by the time children reached the age of puberty. Sadly, it is a dysfunction which is now too often considered to be 'normal', and life-changing surgery is being encouraged in order to make the leap from one gender to the other, or even to some other made-up state of being as if that could ever really happen. In truth, however, boys cannot become girls (XX

chromosome), girls cannot become boys (XY chromosome), but by trying to effect such changes in them they become the disabled victims of medical malpractice.

Only a very tiny percentage of children ever suffer from gender dysphoria in the first place, and, of those who do, more than 80% of them choose what they were from birth (the biological reality) by puberty, and the other close to 20% have a high rate of suicide. Clearly gender dysphoria is not freedom, but bondage of a very debilitating sort and, as noted above, invasive surgery can only make it worse. Let transgenering be banned, therefore, and let all major decisions made on behalf of young children without parental/guardian consent become a criminal offence.

6. Here are five strong pillars which uphold and protect a biblical marriage:

The Leaving and Cleaving Process. Husbands and wives must learn to leave their parents, their old home and any baggage from the past which could hinder their relationship with each other, and learn with that to cleave to one another instead.

Male Headship. This does not deny the equality of husbands and wives, but focuses on the distinctive and complementary roles that God has given them.

Communication. Marriage thrives on the communication that husbands and wives have with each other and on the companionship it builds between them.

Obedience to the Revealed Will of God. As sinners in a fallen world we are subject to trouble, even in marriage, but this pillar displays an attitude which says, "I may not know how to resolve the problem which I now encounter, but I know that, however my spouse may react, God calls me to be obedient to Him in my life and marriage – that I must love my spouse even if she/he does not appear to love me anymore – and that I must continue to act responsibly whatever the outcome."

Prayer. Fervent prayer is effective in holding a marriage together if the believer has not succumbed to carelessness and bad habits. Let husbands and wives pray together regularly. Surveys have consistently shown that less than 1% of all couples who pray together are in any danger of ever breaking up.

These are things we need to teach our children, and demonstrating them by our own example is the best marriage counselling we can give them. Soli Deo Gloria.

