

# STUDY GUIDE

## GENESIS: Week 3 6.8.14

### [set up]

We are in the third week of our 20-week series in Genesis entitled “Genesis: Roots, Relationship, Redemption.” We just finished the first two chapters of Genesis, but we could spend 20 weeks on those two chapters!

Genesis 1:26-2:25 discusses the creation of man and woman. Our culture has stereotypes of what masculinity and femininity should be. What are some of those stereotypes? Do those stereotypes change between culture and time period? Are those stereotypes supported by Scripture?

### [digging deeper]

Read Genesis 1:26-27. Humankind is the only part of creation that is made in the image of God. Even though humans share close similarities with other animals, humans are the only ones made in God’s image and are different in degree and in kind. The Bible describes humans as God’s under-rulers and under-creators. Thinking biblically, what does “have dominion over...” mean for us today? What should that look like in our lives? What are we responsible for as under-rulers and image bearers of God?

Look at 1:27. Scripture says God made humankind in His image but made humankind male and female from the beginning. Men and women both equally image God but are different from one another. Scripture tells us women and men complement each other. How does this fact impact the way we think about our relationships and marriage? How do we interact with people equally but differently? What are the potential pitfalls?<sup>1</sup>

Look at 1:28. This is what theologians call the “Cultural Mandate,” where God tells people to make something from the earth and to cultivate (i.e. change) what God gave people in the Garden. God told Adam and Eve to change things in the Garden before sin entered the world and marred everything. How does the Cultural Mandate impact the way we think about our work? What does it imply about Christians working in their jobs?<sup>2</sup>

In Genesis 2:18-25, Scripture says God made Eve because “there was not found a helper fit for [Adam].” The term “helper” calls to mind a position of less importance or less significance, like hiring extra “help” to clean the house or mow the lawn. But this is far from the truth. The word translated in English as “helper” is the Hebrew word ‘ezer. God provides help to Adam because he could not do what needed to be done without Eve. Adam needed a complement to help him fulfill the Cultural Mandate to make something greater out of the life God gave him. Eve was a help to Adam just like a lawyer is a help to a victim or a doctor is a help to the sick. God even calls himself an ‘ezer in Psalm 54 where Scripture says, “Behold, God is my helper [‘ezer]; the Lord is the upholder of my life.” Eve is a helper to Adam in equality and complement.

What are ways you help those in your family, work, and/or neighborhood do things that they couldn’t without your help?

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<sup>1</sup>For more information on this topic, see The Council of Manhood and Womanhood at <http://cbmw.org/> or see *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* edited by John Piper and Wayne Grudem.

<sup>2</sup>If you are interested in reading a great book on faith and work, see Tim Keller’s book *Every Good Endeavor*.



## [living it out]

God beautifully orchestrated how we are to live as male and female, and how we are to work in our jobs. But in Genesis 3 we see The Fall - when sin entered the world - and now it is difficult to be obedient to the way God ordered the world. It is easy for us to think of our work as a means (money) to an end (vacations, retirement, etc.), and it is easy to take for granted or mistreat members of the opposite sex.

Discuss the forms of entertainment (music, movies, sporting events) present in our culture that do not treat women or men with the care and respect a co-image bearer deserves. Is God asking you to stop taking part in those forms of entertainment?

Praying it through

If your group is made up for couples:

- Take time now for couples to pray together. Have the couples pray for one another and thank God for one another.

If your group is made up of both couples and singles:

- Break the group into men and women. Have each group pray for the relationships with those of the opposite sex (spouse, family, coworkers, etc.).