

Session 18

Male and Female Differences

1. Discipleship Scenario

2. Discussion Questions from *What's the Difference?*, by John Piper

Chapter 1 – "What's the Difference?"

- Piper writes on pp.15-16 that in commending Biblical truth, "*...we must commend the beauty as well as the truth of the vision.*" Why are both elements necessary? How have you specifically seen this play out in your own life?

- There is an inarguable tendency today, both in the church and in the world, to stress the *equality* of men and women by minimizing the *unique significance* of maleness and femaleness. What are the consequences to this kind of an emphasis and how have you seen your own thinking affected or influenced by this?

- Differentiated roles in the Bible are never traced back to the fall; rather, they are traced back to the original creation ordinances of God. Why is this so important when you consider the differences between men and women?

Chapter 2 – “The Meaning of Masculinity”

- Study the definition of masculinity provided on page 23. Is there anything in it that you find objectionable? Is there anything you would add?

- Read through the various clarifying statements about the meaning of mature masculine *leadership* on pp.28-38. Indicate at least three specific ways in which the Holy Spirit has brought conviction where you need to change. Come prepared to share your evaluation with the group.

- Mature manhood senses a benevolent responsibility before God to be the primary provider for your family. How does this affect the manner in which you live and decisions you need to make? How does it affect the way in which you might train a son?

- Review the various relationships you have with women in your life and identify in what ways the information from this chapter ought to specifically affect those relationships.

Chapter 3 – “The Meaning of Femininity”

- Study the definition of femininity on p.49. Is there anything you would add and/or delete?
- What safeguards does Scripture put in place that prevent a woman from being submissive at all costs or under any circumstances? Where have you seen this abused in your life? Where have you seen it beautifully maintained?
- Piper writes, “..the greatest freedom is found in being so changed by God’s Spirit that you can do what you love to do and know that it conforms to the design of God and leads to life and glory.” (p.53). Has this been your Christian experience? How/In what ways?
- Piper raises the question, “...what kind of influence would be inappropriate for mature women to exercise toward men?” (p.61) His solution includes guidance along two continuums. Can you describe his guidance/solution?
- Consider the various potential relationships between men and women that exist in your sphere of life. Using Piper’s guidance in the previous question, evaluate the respective appropriateness or inappropriateness of those relationships.

Chapter 4 – “The Biblical Vision of Complementarity”

- In what ways is God’s design for headship and submission the same within the home and the church? How are they different?

- According to Piper, within the confines of Biblical complementarity, the various opportunities for men and women to minister within the church are “*simply endless*”. Considering the list of potential ministries listed at the end of the book and those that exist in your church, do you agree with his position? How can your church grow in making better use of the ministry service of both men and women? How can you help?

- On page 68, Piper indicates his concern for the lack of spiritual leadership by men in the home and in the church – “*...the spiritual aimlessness and lethargy and loss of nerve among men is the major issue...*” Do you agree with his position? In what specific ways are you either contributing to the problem or solution?

3. Scripture Memory Verse

Genesis 1:27 ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

4. Exercise

Take time to review chapter 5, "*A Closing Challenge to Men and Women*" with your wife. Use this material to help clarify any misconceptions you may have about differences in role and function between you and your wife. Where appropriate, plan some practical steps in which you both agree changes need to take place in your marriage to better support a Biblical model of complementarity.

5. Assignment for Next Time

Read the articles, "Speaking Redemptively" and "Watch Your Language". Next meeting is _____.