

Series: God & Man & Woman #731

Title: Introduction

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world! I am glad that you are here, because today we embark on a new stretch of our journey to discover who God is. The title, if you would like it, is God and Man and Woman. In the Bible we are going back to the beginning and the Book of Genesis. We will focus, at the start, in Genesis chapter 2. And the reason for this series is that for quite some time I have been thinking about men and women, about who we are. And when I think about this I think about who we are in relation to God.

And then I think there can be no better starting point than God, man, and woman in the beginning.

Usually on this podcast and radio broadcast we talk about who God is. And that will continue, as always. But it is appropriate that we also ask questions about who we are as men and as women. Today let me introduce you to some of my thoughts that led me to Genesis chapter 2. Consider this an introduction to what is ahead.

I have in my mind the analogy of looking into a mirror. I am confident that everyone tuning in today has at least one mirror and that you look into it a minimum of once a day. Sometimes I see people out in public and I wonder if they have ever looked at the mirror! But generally men and women check their appearance at least at the beginning of each new day. And I know some of you spend a *long time* in front of the mirror. Frankly, women – you who wear make-up – I do not know how you do it. Painting your face in the morning and then wiping it all off in the evening – day after day – I find myself being thankful that I do not have to do that!

Sometimes I observe women on the subway, on the train, with a compact out adding their eyeliner on the way to the office and I admire their agility. And always there is that mirror. Occasionally I will see both men and women check out their appearance in a public mirror. For example, in a department store. Can you walk by a mirror without looking at yourself? Or, even catching a reflection in a window, the glass on a mobile phone, or even in a pool of water. Mirrors: very important to the human race. And of course there is that classic line from the evil witch in Snow White when she looks to the mirror and says, “Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the fairest of all them all?” She does *not* like the mirror’s response!

Let me ask you this: when you look into the mirror what do you see? Oh, I do not mean how pretty you are or handsome you are or how much you weigh or where to locate your cheek so that you can brush it with your make up, or which way to comb your hair or affix your necktie. What I mean is more...a better way to ask it is...*who* do you see?

Have you ever paused at the mirror – looked at yourself for a while – and asked this question: “who am I?” This question looks past your outward appearance and takes you closer to your soul. Who are you on the inside? Who is the “you” that no one can see? In the recesses of your personhood, who are *you*? Often we do this when we are very tired. We see the weariness in our physical appearance and it causes us to ask the question: why am I so tired? What is making me this way? And we ask who we are when we are deeply bothered by something (when we are troubled). We have acted in a way, we have thoughts, and/or we have spoken words to others that disturb *us*. And so this question comes to the forefront of our minds: “who am I really?” Deep down, in my soul and spirit, who am I? Have you asked yourself this question?

I have. And I submit to you this is a good question, a valid question, and one well worth asking. Now whether or not you do that in front of a mirror, well, that’s up to you. Personally I do not like to spend too long in front of the mirror. Let’s just put it this way: I have a face for audio, not visual! That’s why the radio and the audio podcasts suit me very well. Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the most handsome of them all? I am not waiting for a response on that! In fact, I am not even asking the question!

But the question that is worth asking is: who am I? This Bible asks and answers this very question by gifting to us *the true* perspective on both man and woman. And so we put this question into the context of the very first Book of the Bible: Genesis. This is the Book of Beginnings and so in the days that follow let’s look at the beginning of humanity. As we do we will find God Himself clearly answers our question. He gives us the doctrine or the teaching of man and woman (of the male and the female).

It does not matter where you are in the world right now, what geographic location. It seems that who we are is being discussed. Here in the United States I keep hearing from some that we are all bad. There is nothing good in us. We're evil. And yet from others this boisterous voice says that we are all fine. There is nothing bad in us. We're good. The two voices and opinions are pitted against one another and there is a loud, in your face, often-violent tug of war between who is perceived to be good and who is perceived to be evil. America is on the brink of a second Civil War and the basis for the conflict seems to be over the question: who are we?

And if we are inherently bad or evil then can we be made good or righteous? And if we are inherently good and righteous then can we be made bad and evil? Can we switch sides? In the United States now everyone's assessment of everyone else seems to come down to this: which side, or whose side, are you on? And a lot of this has to do with an upcoming presidential election. So if you are here in America, listening coast-to-coast, you can set our time in Genesis 2 smack, dab, down into the middle of election year politics.

But, you say, "I am listening on the podcast outside of your America!" My friend, I am glad to have you from all the way around the world. Take an assessment of your own country, city, state, region, area, and village. How are things there? Is not the question "who are we" pertinent to you? As I carefully and discerningly survey the world news, which is of great interest to me, I hear people of multiple races, ethnicities, and nations asking a very similar question in their language: who am I? Who are we? We all want to know what is the true state of the human condition.

And the question, who are we, is not new. (Not at all.) If you are into philosophy then you will know this name: Socrates. Socrates was a real man, born in Athens Greece around 469BC. He never wrote his philosophy down himself, but his students did and one of them you may also know or have heard of. His name is Plato. Socrates' famous method of argument among the philosophers is what we now call the "Socratic method" or the "Socratic argument." What he did was to trick those who disagreed with him into contradicting themselves. Ultimately this got old Socrates into trouble and he dies by poisoning (forced suicide by the poison Hemlock killed him in 399BC). Or, so goes the story.

And Socrates is credited with this phrase: "know thyself." (Know thyself.) Did he invent it? No. But today he gets credit for it. Know thyself. I like it. And I think I should know myself. Frankly, I think you should know yourself. And this statement agrees with something we will learn in the Bible. It is wise to know yourself. Who are you? Do you know how to answer that question? Who am I? Do I know how to answer that for myself? Let's find out as we proceed in our series: God and Man and Woman in Genesis chapter 2.

And then, of course, this question goes much farther back than Socrates. Listen to what King David asked God in the eighth Psalm. Psalm chapter 8 and verse 4. David writes, asking God, "**What is man that You take thought of him?**" (Psalm 8.4.) "**What is man that You take thought of him?**" Great question! And really a question that is pertinent to our time. Who are we? Who is God? And who are we in relation to God?

This is what we are going to be wrestling with coming up on God Is! And now, if I may, here's a two-day challenge I want to give you. And let's have some fun with this. Sometime before this Wednesday, read or have read to you from an audio Bible, Genesis chapters 1 and 2. Read all of Genesis chapters 1 and 2. Here is what I want you to identify. Can you tell me what name throughout chapter 1 is changed in chapter 2? As you read the first two chapters of Genesis, can you identify a name used in chapter 1 that is changed in chapter 2?

The first five people that write to me with the correct answer will receive a free gift from me. It will be a book that will help you to understand the entire Book of Genesis better. I'll give you until Wednesday, God Is Episode number 733, to find this in the Bible and to write to me. Can you tell me what name throughout Genesis chapter 1 is changed in Genesis chapter 2? The winners get a substantial free gift. Write to me today!

I think you understand me correctly. It is simple: read Genesis chapters 1 and 2 in the Bible and identify what name used in chapter 1 is changed in chapter 2. Do this, and then join me tomorrow as we discover who we are and who God Is!

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