

Series: God & Man & Woman #761

Title: The First Man & the First Woman, Part 4

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! It is very good to have you here as we begin a brand new week of broadcasting on the radio and podcasting on the Internet, and as this podcast plays on your mobile device. When we were last together on Friday I felt that I had moved a little too quickly there, so today I want to come back and do some review. As with you in your work, some days you do it well – you are greatly satisfied – and some days you do not do it as well and need to improve. (Same here friends. Please be patient with me.)

By way of review, let me remind you what we began last Wednesday. In our ongoing series God and Man and Woman in Genesis chapter 2 we have worked our way all the way down to verse 17. And in-between verses 17 and 18 I want to share with you a profile of the first man and the first woman. We've already met the man in detail. And soon, we will meet the woman in detail. But first, we pause to ask: who were they? At this point in time – in the garden in Eden, in perfection, and before sin entered the world – who were Adam and Eve? In making this applicable to us, we are also asking how are we similar to them and how are we different? This is our plan.

You can think of it this way: do you like to eat? I sure do! Some of my favorite parts of the day and night are mealtimes. Well, when I am in the United States I like a good sandwich for lunch. Right now I favor tuna salad on marble rye with a little mayonnaise, cheddar cheese, and pickles. And yes, I am aware this is not a healthy choice, so I limit myself to say one a week. The rest of the time, it's salad. Sigh. Think of a sandwich. There is one piece of bread (let's call that Genesis 2, verse 17) and there is the other piece of bread (let's call that Genesis 2, verse 18). Between those slices of bread goes the content of the sandwich (the tuna salad, the cheese, etc.). Well, between Genesis 2, verse 17 and verse 18 we are putting in some content: this profile of the first man and woman. I hope we can bite down hard, take a chunk everyday, chew on it, and digest it well. I hope this spiritual sandwich will fill us and satisfy us.

Now when I am over in Hong Kong (where we live part of the year), I do not eat sandwiches. Why would I do that when I can walk down to the corner and order a bowl of noodles and dumplings? Yum! Again, noted: not healthy. But they sure are tasty. And of course I am slurping in my noodles and grabbing a firm grip on my dumplings with...my chopsticks. So, in the Asian context, think of Genesis 2, verse 17 as being one chopstick and Genesis 2, verse 18 as being the other chopstick. In-between goes the content: the profile of the first man and woman (the dumplings and noodles, if you will).

As you will remember, if you have been with us, thus far we have two main details built into our profile. First, Adam and Eve are real, historical people. They really did both live, just as the Bible describes. We talked about that last Wednesday. Then, second, Adam and Eve were both made in the image of God. We talked about that last Thursday and Friday. And we agreed that you and I are also made in the image of God. Now, on this second point we have five sub points, if you will. There are *five* ways in which we are made in God's image. We've discussed the first three. Do you remember them?

We are made in the image of God because we exist as living, personal beings. We are relational beings. And we are emotional beings. And we saw in the Word of God how God is a living, personal being, how God is relational, and yes how God expresses emotions. I hope that this review will allow you to come back into the Bible with me today very aware of where we are. And, if you are new to this radio broadcast and podcast, then you're all caught up. By the grace of God I will do my best to lay before this outline so that we can all follow along together closely. But if you ever have any questions – about *anything* – just drop me an email or letter. I will be more than happy to interact with you, wherever you are. All of my contact details are on my website, godisministry.org, and you can even email me from there by clicking the link marked *Contact*. I look forward to hearing from you!

Now, as I have promised earlier, let me take us back to our discussion on Friday about us being made in the image of God as *emotional* beings. It is important to know that as God expresses emotions, so we are people, made in His image, who all have emotions. I am not saying we are all *emotional*. I happen to be a person who can be very emotional. If you were to hear me preach a sermon in a local church, I will do so with great passion, I am expressive, wearing my emotions in my words and facial expressions. Other preachers are less emotional. More reserved, calm, it is less easy to detect how they *feel*.

Or, take something far less important like watching sports. I will be jumping up and down, pacing, yelling at the players and coaches. I am ecstatic when my team wins, joyful, and I will express gratefulness and optimism. But if my team is losing and/or then loses, well I am saddened, I feel angry, agitated, and critical, outraged – how could they possibly play so poorly? After a loss I am stewing in negativity until the next win! But still other fans, who care as much as I do, just sit there, not expressing these emotions (even if they inwardly feel the same way). Nobody likes to lose! There is no one-way to be a fan of your favorite teams. Emotions are processed differently person-to-person.

But, to be human is to have emotions. And this makes sense because we are made in the image of God and God expresses Himself in a way that we can relate to. So in the Bible we read about God being joyful and God getting angry and God having love as well as jealousy. As God is, so we are, because we are made in His image.

However, a distinction must be made between God's emotions and ours. God does not have mood swings. He is not moody. Up and down (as we are often are). The Bible records God's emotions in a way that we can understand. This is part of how God relates to us who He is. But unlike us all of God's emotions are grounded in His holiness. God cannot sin, and therefore God's emotions are always expressed without sin. Follow Jesus around closely in the Gospels. You will read of Him expressing emotion, but He always does so perfectly.

Whereas, we sin with our emotions. Right? Hasn't this been your experience with how you at least sometimes handle your emotions? You act out based on what you are feeling. For example, if we feel sad we can start to overeat. (The sin of gluttony.) If we feel lonely we can give way to lust and illicit sex becomes a way to treat the loneliness. If we feel angry, we lash out; using foul language and maybe even punching out the guy we are having a disagreement with. How do you handle your anger or impatience driving in the car? Or, when we feel rejected, we gossip – tearing down someone else by spreading a rumor. As Christians we have to be very careful with our emotions. We sin with them, but God never does. God is perfect. His emotion is rooted and grounded in His holiness.

This problem – a big problem for us – of sinning within our emotions; of not knowing how to handle them – has led some Christian traditions, pastors, and churches to teach that emotions are bad, even evil and to please God we need to deny or suppress our emotions. But, I want to stress again today that is *not* biblical! We must be on guard about sinning with our emotions, yes. Definitely. Be self-controlled. *But*, there are times to have grief, to have joy, to feel angry, of course to love but also to hate, and even to be jealous. The idea that Christians are emotionless robots is just not true. Do not suppress or deny your emotions, rather give them over to Jesus Christ, such that He can transform them!

God has made you and I to be emotional beings. We must recognize this. I feel we will be able to sin less if we understand our emotions, identify where they are coming from, what is causing us to feel, say, rejection or anger, and how to respond to these emotions in a God honoring way. This is where a competent, Christian counselor, who knows the Bible as well as psychology can help all of us. Choose very carefully, be discerning, but do not fear seeing a good counselor. Your pastor too can likely help you.

And, what is most important is that you know Jesus Christ. Not just that you know *of* Him, but that you, personally, have an intimate relationship with the Lord. Do you? If you reject Christ, or keep Him as merely an intellectual interest, then you will not be able to handle your emotions in a healthy way. Jesus has the power to heal your emotions and set you free from the destructive ways in which you're now handling what you *feel*. I highly recommend Him to you, and will be happy to tell you more about Him if you contact me. And if you join me tomorrow for God Is!

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