**Biblical Foundations – The Works of God**

**Man, as Male and Female (Pt.4)**

Why did God create two sexes? Can men and women be equal and yet have different roles?

**Indications of Distinct Roles Before the Fall-** Were these distinctions between the male and female roles part of God’s original creation, or were they introduced as part of the punishment of the fall? (Genesis 3:16) The idea that differences in authority were introduced only after there was sin in the world has been advocated by several scholars, however, if we examine the text of the creation narrative in Genesis, we see several indications of differences in roles between Adam and Eve even before sin and the fall.

1. **The serpent came to Eve first**- Satan, after he sinned, was attempting to distort and undermine everything that God had planned and created as good. Therefore, Satan (in the form of the serpent), in approaching Eve first, was attempting to institute a role reversal by tempting Eve to take the leadership in disobeying God. (Genesis 3:1) This stands in contrasts to the way God approached them, for when God spoke to them, he spoke to Adam first. (Genesis 2:15-17; 3:9) Paul seems to have this in mind when he writes to Timothy. (1 Timothy 2:14)
2. **God spoke to Adam first after the fall**- Just as God spoke to Adam on his own even before Eve was created (Genesis 2:15-17), so too after the fall, even though Eve had sinned first, God came first to Adam and called him to account for his actions. (Genesis 3:9) God viewed Adam as the leader of his family, and the one to be called to account first for what had happened in the family.
3. **The curse brought a distortion of previous roles, not the introduction of new roles**- In the punishments God gave to Adam and Eve, he did not introduce new roles or functions but simply introduced pain and distortion into the functions they previously had. Thus, Adam would still have the primary responsibility for tilling the ground and raising crops, but the ground would bring forth “thorns and thistles”. (Genesis 3:18-19) Similarly, Eve would still have the responsibility of bearing children, but to do so would become painful. (Genesis 3:16) Then God also introduced pain and conflict into the previously harmonious relationship between Adam and Eve. (Genesis 3:16) The word **“desire”** (teshuqah) means woman yearns and longs to settle down with a husband and not merely sexual attraction, but a longing that involves all of life and a longing and attraction that is much deeper and involves more of life than that of man. The woman would also live in subjection to the man-yet this judgment applies to every man individually, not to all men over all women.

**Misunderstanding of Mutual Submission and Authoritative Submission** (Ephesians 5:21-33)**- In** recent years there has been some debate over the meaning of the verb **“submit”** (hypotasso) in this passage. Some interpreters have pointed to verse 21 **“submitting to one another in the fear of God”** and claimed the correct meaning of the entire passage is **“mutual submission”**, meaning that both the husband and wife should **“submit to one another”** by taking into consideration the needs and wants of the other person. According to this view, the wife does not have a unique responsibility to submit to the husband’s authority, because both husband and wife are to submit to one another. However, this interpretation of **“mutual submission”** is incompatible with every established meaning of the term (hypotasso), which always implies a relationship of *one-directional submission* to an authority. It is used elsewhere in the New Testament of Jesus submitting to the authority of his parents (Luke 2:51), demons submitting to the disciples (Luke 10:17), citizens submitting to government (Romans 13:1), universe subject to Christ (1 Corinthians 15:27), Christ subject to the Father (1 Corinthians 15:28), church membership subject to church leaders (1 Corinthians 16:16-17), wives to husbands (Colossians 3:18), the church to Christ (Ephesians 5:24), servants to masters (1 Peter 2:18), and Christians to God the Father (Hebrews 12:9). **None of these relationships is ever reversed**. In fact, this term for submission was also used outside the New Testament to describe the submission and obedience of soldiers in an army to those of superior rank.