

Spiritual Faithfulness to Our Gender, Part 1

By Judy TenElshof

- Announcer:

I'd like to just say I pray that God is sovereign. In how the election works out.

With respect to what we want to talk about tonight. We want to talk about gender and being faithful to Christ in one's gender. What it is to find Christ in gender to live out gender. What does that mean? What I want to do first of all is I want to just open our heart in prayer. Why don't we turn to prayer right now.

Lord. As we come to you, we want to open our heart to what it is that you would say about gender, what it is that you would say about what it is to be a man or a woman.

What I'd like you to do while you're praying. I'd like you as David does in the song. I'd like you to take counsel in your heart. And I want you to ask your soul and ask God this. And I want you to spend the next. Minute doing this.

He wants you to ask yourself Oh soul Oh God. Am I comfortable with being a man or a woman? Ask yourself that. [pause] I want you to ask your soul or soul and oh God. Do I know what it is to be a man, and a woman. And then ask this to your soul. Oh soul, am I the man or woman that I should be. Those who are coming in just go ahead and sit down. I want you now to take the next minute before we begin because so much of this is based on honesty and openness. Once you take the next minute in your own soul. To just explore in your heart before God. God am I the woman or man I am to be. So let's take some time. To.

Father we do ask you that you would open our heart to these things. We wish to grow we wish to be open to your will. And so use our speaker to lead us into your will. Grant us grace in Jesus name. Amen.

Tonight we have a special gift. Dr. Judy Nelson. Is going to share with us. She's the associate professor of Christian ministry and leadership at Talbot School of Theology. She is also a staff therapist. The Biola Counseling Center. She received her DNA M.A. in marriage and family counseling at Fuller Seminary. And M.A. at Talbot School of Theology. She is a retreat and conference speaker. She's contributed on several articles and she'll be speaking tonight as she edited the book. That was done at Talbot in the area of gender. She's also begun a retreat ministry for pastors called hilltop which is associated very much with what we're doing here at the Institute for Spiritual Formation. Judy is gonna be teaching on spiritual faithfulness to our gender. So why don't we welcome Judy TenElshof. [applause]

- TenElshof:

I come to you tonight as a learner. Not as one who knows. And not even one who has written. But one who is still in her heart trying to figure this out. We had, two years ago we were asked by Moody to do a book on complementarity. Women and men and ministry. Dr. Robert Sophy and myself have taught that class for, oh maybe three or four years now. And every year we learn more and every year I pray that I'm doing it better. And still I know there's so much in my life it still has to. Be given over to the spirit. In this whole area of gender. It's a difficult area. And what we did with the book is we had professors in several different areas; New Testament, Old Testament, anthropology, psychology. Actually I wrote the one in psychology the chapter but we had different professors come together and we spent a lot of time in the last two years talking discussing trying to figure out. Just what is this whole thing and gender about.

Well the book is finally finished. We sent it into Moody, and I wanted to uh, we really haven't presented much in terms of this. And so when John and I were talking any and we were trying to figure out what we wanted to do. I said we really should present something in this whole area of gender. And when I looked over the book. The part that I thought would interest you most and the part that I thought would be the most practical because it would help you to look down into your soul and figure out; "What of this fits with where I am now and what is the Bible saying?" and those kind of things that I thought it would be most helpful to present the chapter that John wrote.

And that's kind of weird for me to be here presenting someone else's writing. But. We want to present it together tonight. To help you see the complementary fashion. Of what it means to be man and woman and to reflect the image of God. I don't want to speak for John but just as we talking a few minutes before. I think. We both feel very much like, whoa are we ready to say this in public. Are we ready to look at where we aren't yet? And that's difficult. And so I'm going to do an introduction and kind of read and talk through some of the things that John wrote in the introduction to the chapter.

Some of is my own that I put in just as in prepare preparation for this and some of it this chapter. And then we're gonna get up here together and show gender specific. A typology of man and woman. Him presenting the male and me presenting the female. And I just hope as you listen your hearts will be open. And you will begin to understand something deeper about gender that you haven't experienced before. There's a lot out there right now. And I want you to hear some of what he's written and some of how it fits in terms of what the Bible has to say. So here we go.

What does it mean to be spiritually faithful to our gender? That is the question of the hour and it's a difficult one to answer. In my own experience I have struggled with much pain and frustration in trying to discover and live out what it means to be spiritually faithful to my female gender. When do I speak? When do I be silent? When do I listen to my husband? When to be bold. When to be submissive. When to lead. When to be quiet.

Then as a female professor. How do I mentor women? And how to be faithful to their gender. Women students like myself who take the Scriptures seriously. Have great passion for Theology and for evangelism. And feel frustrated not knowing whether to bite their tongues and be silent, be instructed at home by their husbands or maybe they're single. Or use their minds and passions to God's glory regardless of the flak around them. At times they along with myself are so discouraged. We are ready to leave the church and forget about being trained and just give up.

Maybe some of you have been there. But I don't think we're the only one struggling. I talked to my men colleagues and the men that I teach. Where is their strength needed in today's world? There's no wars to fight. And even if there were, women now fight. They wrestle. Just watch the Olympics. They can play football. They can lead. What in today's world does it mean to be a male?

In the presence of women, depending on the personality and the environment in which they grew up and their experiences they may be intimidated. Or they may be feeling like taking authority. They may feel impotent. They may be intimidated. They may want to protect. Men, too, are discouraged. And they too are confused and many of them are ready to give up.

So the question we are dealing with is not an easy one. How does one become spiritually faithful to one's gender. I think that both John and I would say that we are in a process of learning what it means. But in practice we have a long way to go. And a long way to go in what it means to be spiritually faithful to our gender. We both realize that there is probably much more and we know that there is much more we've read about. We've written a whole book you know and there's so much more to be said than what we are saying tonight. And I hope you realize that as you listen. We hope that we will encourage you to dig deeper. Into scripture for understanding. That you will look for examples. Of what we've talked about. And for God's Spirit to enlighten you and encourage you as you become more and more able to be faithful to him and your gender.

But first we need to clarify some definitions. What does it mean to be faithful first of all, to our gender. Webster defines the faithful as being true. Or trustworthy in detail. So as to be worthy of belief or confidence. Can someone have confidence in you to be trustworthy to your gender. Like a faithful copy or loyal members of a group. For example if you want to take a do make a duplicate of a of a piece of paper a picture. You would take the Xerox machine and you would push the button and you'd put it in there and you'd push the button and you hopefully trust that the machine will produce a duplicate copy of the original. If we apply this to gender. When a female is born we know the Maker. We knew who made. The female. And the male. So we trust that the female that is born is like every other female. And unlike every male. There is something very different that we are in our gender that we can trust is very different from the opposite gender. And when this difference is blurred we become confused. Not only about our own gender identity but how to relate to others.

So one of the things we want to do tonight is to help us clarify and understand this difference between men and women from a Biblical perspective. Secondly we need to look at what does it mean to be spiritually faithful to our gender. To be spiritually faithful to one's gender is to understand what John defined in his chapter as covenant relational nature of gender and the covenant typology of gender. First let's look at the Covenant relational nature of gender. And it's that gender finds its true ontology in being a finite reflection or analogy of the relation malady of God as he chose to create this in finite human form. In other words. He took his image and made us a reflection of Himself. Though it's imperfect in how we reflect. Kurdish Bond states following Barth that God created not a solitary human being, but human beings in relationship. That is in a manner corresponding to his own non solitaryness. He placed human beings in a mode of existence similar to his own. Existing then as male and female together, human beings are made in the image of God. Together we create the image of God. Gender was to reflect God's relationality and ultimately the human need for completeness, relationship and union with God and one another.

Human gender informs us that we are fully persons only with the other. A number of issues flow from this. Gender is not understand most fundamentally as isolated sets of male and female traits and capabilities. That's how often we think of it. We think male is like this and a female is like that and that's how we want to define gender. But instead we need to define it as openness to

relationship, being analogous expression of the Triune God. By definition God as an infinite being has no gender. He is neither male nor female.

This must inform our view our view of personhood. Her personhood at the core. An analogy of God. Gender is a quality of created finitude particularly human image bearers which in some way reflects the fact that personhood in its very essence - both in the absence of God and its reflection and gender - is relational. From this God-centered view point then gender is not most fundamentally about peculiar male and female traits and capabilities. Or capacities. Rather it is about a deep relationality at the core of personhood which is clearly reflected in the gender pair, who need and call to one another. And ultimately to God for intimacy and union.

We can sort of see that in marriage. Can you see it in the church. Are we calling to one another. And ultimately to God. For intimacy and union. So that we're reflecting to the world what it really means to be in the image of God. Are we reflecting his image of encompassing both male and female. Thus the covenant of view points to genders own transcendental nature in its capacity to receive not only the other, but God himself, into the very dynamics. Capacities and powers of the human heart to become part takers of the divine nature is reflected in second Peter one for.

This covenant all union is a relationship beyond whatever could be realized by man and woman alone. For God is capable of literally inhabiting them in their psychological structures at the place of their agency and core identity. Binding them in union with Himself and one another in the church. Thus gender points to a new horizon of relationality. The different way to look at gender. It's pointing us to be in relationship.

The new covenant does not abolish gender in human nature, functioning or role distinctions. Rather the spirit glorifies gender in Christ. By bringing it to its full relational telos in the church. In this sense man and woman are more than their gender. And this more is their capacity to receive a new identity in Christ and the spirit. To say that gender is inessential to the human being is to deny and confuse the self. To split off the self. From itself. And to live a lie. However to identify oneself most essentially with one's gender functioning within the finite horizon of experience alone is to misidentify oneself. Gender functioning in Christ opens to new horizons of relating to one another in God. Here in the depths of union. We discover the very mystery and radical relationality of personhood which thoroughly conditions all of our gender specific functioning. And this is the foundation on which we got to be able to see the differences. Because the differences are to bring to the world a reflection of oneness. So the differences have to be there. Even though there is much commonality. As I'll go on to say.

I stated earlier that there are two parts to understanding what it means to be spiritually faithful to one's gender. The second part is to understand the covenant typology of gender. The Bible and

human observation also reveal a gender specific dimension of personhood which is also grounded in covenant with God. By creation and covenant. It is something. It is something to be male and female. It's not to be the same. It is something to be male and female and failure to understand and consent to one's gender. Results in distortion. And often havoc - in the home, church, society, and personal experience. And I think we've all experienced that. Because we don't know what those traits should be. We often are operationalizing in our own life traits that really don't belong to us.

In this sense Barth is right. He says "I am not a person. I have never met a person. Human finitude only comes packaged as male and female." Krish Bohm, who worked intimately with Barth on his church dogmatic comments on this very point. He said "Humankind exists as male and female and only in the unity of this twofold nature. A human being taken on its own in isolation is not a real human being but an abstraction in human thought. The real human being exists as a man alongside a woman, a woman alongside a man. There is no such thing as a woman existing in isolation anymore than there is such a thing as a man existing in isolation." Both the Bible and reality teach that gender is a necessary or essential element of our personhood. Identity and ontology and thus. In element which impinges upon the manner in which we live out our new identity in Christ. A covenant or gender typology reflects a whole range of Gender specific functioning which in turn reflects the very relationships and dynamics between God the Father the Son and God the Spirit. They are not identical persons just like we are not. But they have their own uniquenesses and relational distinctiveness. One to the other with the same nature. This takes us to the very heart of the mystery of personhood of which male

and female are merely a finite glimmer. Failure to properly express God's image in human gender. Is to distort the analogous relational dynamic presence of God in persons to the Earth. We need to reflect who God really is by showing the unity and oneness that God is in His very existence.

Consequently it turns out that within human ontology there are overlapping. -it's important to remember that, to hear this - within human ontology there are overlapping gender shared and gender specific levels of essential human capacities and corresponding virtues. Some of which are more central than others and expecting defining and aiding one and experiencing and understanding one's nature and personal identity. Because there is so much continuity shared between genders, there must be in some sense a gender shared dimension to human nature. And that's what so often gets us confused about the gender specific traits because to separate out what do we share. And so even in our gender specific traits it is primarily what we need to be reflect. But it doesn't mean that the other doesn't reflect that too.

And that's where it gets to be difficult. Let me see, I lost my place here [flipping pages].

However there is according to the Bible an observation a gender typology with clear gender distinctives and there must be some gender specific dimension to human nature and identity which individuates male from female in some sense. In my book that's primarily where I wrote. In the psychological differences of male and female - and there's a lot. Even in our creation in the womb. We go through different experiences so a male comes out. With a less connected brain

than a woman comes out. OK. Their interconnections between right and left brain are severed in the 16th week. Women - that doesn't happen. And so they're connected more between right and left brain. So that helps us to know that if something happens psychologically and biologically to us in the womb even before we're born that God made us to have distinctiveness. Even though there's much about us that are the same. Clearly then gender is not done away with. But is both a means of growth in Christ and it's glorified by Christ. Moreover cooperation with one's gender. Serves as a catalyst in the growth of the other gender. Let me say that again because it's important. Cooperation with your own gender serves as a catalyst in the growth of the opposite gender.

So if you grow in expressing if I grow in expressing my female distinctiveness it helps the male to be come more male. It at least is a catalyst for him to be something different than what I am. And that's why the whole movement of the feminists in trying to make us look same has hurt us so much. On the other hand it has awakened us to take a look at this Biblically in a much deeper way.

Men and women are not meant to grow in isolation even in their gender. As we shall discuss gender interaction and interdependence is necessary for healthy gender growth. And ultimate growth in union with God. And one another. Having looked at what it means to be spiritually faithful, we now turn to what one is called by God to be faithful to in regards to gender specific traits. In Pauline terms, woman was made for man. And man was made to be with a woman for

Christ to the end that they both in this mutual interdependence be made fully in the image of Christ by union with a spirit in the church. A long sentence fully packed. I'm going to read it again.

And this is what Paul says in his gospel: Woman was made for man. And Man was made to be with women for Christ to the end that they both in their mutual interdependence be made fully in the image of Christ. By union with the spirit in the church. This is to be contrasted with any attempt to live out one's gender. In a way that obscures or underemphasizes the relational interdependence necessary to fathom an actualized man and woman. Man and woman are ultimately made for and become full persons in union with another by the spirit. This is meaningful complementarity. The gender specific traits John and I will now share with you are complementary in nature. And therefore we will share them in that nature. While we are sharing these traits. It is important too. To remember that embracing one's gender. Was meant to work best in the context of both men and women mutually submitting to one another. And to what their gender calls them to do in Christ for the other. However there is always the risk in living out one's gender that the other will not respond.

How many times have you tried to do what God asks you to do whether that be in submission or taking authority but the other didn't respond. The man may embrace woman who refuses to help him. The woman may help a man, who shuns her. Grounding their identity and relatedness in Christ will aid man and woman in having the courage to risk being faithful. To their gender and

this risk and relationship happens over and over and over and over. It will not end. Because we're dealing with imperfect people. And so it's only in Christ that we can even take these risks because we are so loved by him and so in union with him. That we are able to take that risk over and over. And. And I think that's why. The higher levels of leadership that you get to that God places you in, the higher the status, the deeper you have to go with Christ. The more time has to be spent. If not we will fail. And instead of risking for more intimacy we'll start a new. And we'll cast the old aside and try again with someone new where it feels like there's very little risk.

Only His love is utterly constant. By His love I mean Christ's love. And that's what we really have to hold on to. In this whole sense of risking. To find more intimacy between genders so we can reflect to the world. What it really means. To carry the image of God. John is going to start and share with you a little about what it means when Paul talks about man as with woman.

- Speaker 2

It's very strange to help your paper read. Look at it go. Did I say that that was kind of dumb.[laughter] No, I was interested if I could I wish my wife was here administering this severing at what 16 weeks. Well that would explain a lot of things in my marriage. Severing. Male. Detached. Judy and I have become more and more friends. That's a strange thing. That that's a risk thing too. Especially when you're married. And maybe as we get to the end we'll talk about well what what are the implications of that. Because on the one hand we want to in the church we want to protect fidelity to our marriages. And of course this is referring to those who are married. But even fidelity if you're not married. Because if you're not married and you've

chosen to be or that's God's will for you then there's still a fidelity issue to Christ with your own sexuality. And the risk is always as you get to know someone - Temptation - somebody is meeting a need that something else is not meeting. And and as we talk about that in the church I'm going to maybe we'll have time at the end of what that might look like a church where males and females are truly interacting with one another as friends, even across marital lines. As we discuss gender, I don't know how much we're going to get through all of the material.

Let me let me just say this is an in constant was what could Judy's already said. Our concern as we think about gender is that we don't want to engage in the idolatry of gender. And what I mean by that is simply this. The non-Christian can take on their gender. I've met non Christian women and men who in some ways look more healthy women and men than the Christian. They're being, well let's put it this way. Their lives are are consistent with their nature perhaps more than yours and mine. Because our rearing is gonna have a lot to do with this I think, and choices. However the thing that Judy brought up here was being faithful to our gender. That's a different issue. Because being faithful to the gender. That's a relational term. Being faithful means that I recognize God has given to me this gender. It's part of my ontology it's part of my deep and now how do I be faithful to him in experiencing this. How do I be faithful to you. To Gretta. To other women because you as a woman are only going to grow to some degree as I'm being faithful being a man. And I'm only going to grow in being a man to some degree as the woman is being faithful because again it's in this relationality that we are called by God to become what we can be.

The point of the whole Genesis text is that when God chose to create something in His image He didn't create a person. We just have to get that in our head. He didn't create an abstract thing that now our culture says that's personhood. You know he said he goes I think I want to create something in my image. Well, I'm relational; the Father, Son, the Spirit. And there are internal dynamics here. I have to express. And so the only way I can do it. Here. That's it. That is the image of God. The image of God is the expression of the self in male female terms. As she and I - particularly Gretta and I - but now even more so in the church as she and I - as we embrace that expresses the image of God and how to be faithful to that. And not only that but you know gender opens up to as Judy shared. It opens up that really I was made for a deeper union. Remember Ephesians 5. When he quotes Genesis 2:24 for this cause of mentally father mother cleave to his wife cleave to his wife to shall be one. Right oneness union. That's what we were called to.

Remember what Paul says? "And this refers to a mystery" of Christ in the church while the mystery is that our relationality of gender points to that she and I were called even for greater union to God that that my relationality is so otherworldly that it literally, can now take it has the capacity to take God Himself into myself and so gender points to this radical relationality.

As we as we turn to look at gender traits now. Again like Judy said I just want us to keep in mind constantly. That we don't wear gender like like a coat of arms we don't wear it like clothing and

say See I'm doing X, Y, and Z and that makes me a man. What we do is we we come in humility before the cross and we say God I can't be faithful to gender without you. Meaning I can't do this unless I'm relating to you open to you what this means to wear my gender and unless I'm open to Judy and other women and other men in what is it to experience my gender in relationship. And so again we run the risk of wearing our gender as something that's artificial and forced and it can even become oppressive to one another and and I've experienced this.

I was in a church that I would say is a very Bible teaching church for 20 years that preach pretty straight forward and yet was because of again so I would say some relational problems in the church - extremely masculine and not the feminine element at all and you know evident in the church, as a result there there's an oppressive feel that the women and even men might experience in that environment. And so again we we have to do this with humility, looking to Christ in this.

But let's begin then if you're actually this is a typology it's it's a list of characteristics now. Now people like Karl Barth who I totally agree with at one level when he says "I've never met a person there's no persons I've only met concrete males and females" yet he goes on to say "I'm not sure I find this list of characteristics in the Bible". Now here's where I disagree and there's a there's a reason that Barth didn't think that but it has to do a little bit of his view of inerrancy in the Bible. But I think if we just kind of take a straightforward look I think we are going to find the Bible does talk about differences. Some of them are very straightforward. Now in the ones

that Judy are going to talk about. Some of them we had to kind of look in what we might call the penumbra of the text you know that word penumbra it means the shadow right. The Roe v. Wade decision said that they found the choice in the Constitution. It was in the penumbra of the constitution meaning you don't see the word choice but it's in the shadow of it. Well maybe maybe yes maybe no. But when it comes to this theology. We had to kind of dig around. Because it would've been nice if if a Biblical writer said By the way for the next 10 chapters I'm going to tell you what it is to be a man and a woman. That would have been great. So we had to kind of. Dig and try to be consistent with the rest of the text. If you're if you're taking notes at all what you might do is you might draw if you want a kind of line down the middle of a page because Judy and I are going to go back and forth and we'll just see how far we get.

And under the man. We're going to say that it is something that is general about him is that God created him with this capacity for what I call with-ness W I T H dash n-e-s-s it's not a word I'm stipulating this word it's with-ness. This is what is fundamental demand to be with a woman to be with creation. For the woman if there's going to be a fundamental trait and Judy will talk about this it's going to be for-ness: f-o-r dash n-e-s-s another stipulated definition that we'll talk about.

But first let's talk about with-ness and I'm going to read a little bit of this but skip around. Perhaps more than any other metaphor describable to the male in his gendered role is his relational capacity for with-ness. Apart from ruling and subduing the garden, Adam is given only

one other command. Namely to embrace or to be with the woman. Genesis 2:24. Adam is created alone. He's incomplete. God says that's not good that he's alone. And thus he is in need of the other gender. Genesis 2:18. The command to embrace the woman implies that man was not merely created to rule nature. But to do it in relational connectedness with the woman. That to me has become, what can I say, a kind of not a battle cry but it's become something that I'm trying to embrace. Then in what I do I'm not to do it an isolated loneliness. In fact there is something about Judy - particularly Gretta since I chose marriage - some of you in this age of the Covenant do not need to, right? Jesus said those who wish to make themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven you can do so if you wish now. But nevertheless married or not. I cannot rule. I cannot do what I was created to do. Apart from her. Apart from you. Apart from you. And particularly apart from Gretta.

God called us as as a whole and said that's male and female. That's that's what I had in mind when I wanted to create personhood. And so when you do whatever you're doing is male and female. You need to do it with in relational connectedness with the woman by creation man has a capacity to rule with her, to be with her. To let the embrace of her be part of his and not merely to go after his own pursuits in ruling as an individual. And of course this is what I saw at the church that I was part of for so long. Men not embracing woman enough so that they would be impacted by this. In short man would be completed by her as the result of his drawing her to himself. Man's compliance with this with-ness dimension of his nature by cleaving the woman would help True Humanity expressed in male and female. That is this, unless the male cleaves to the woman, unless he is he is making that effort to do that - and what we see in marriage so often

he's doing it in romance prior to marriage but once he gets married he's off doing his thing and the woman's wondering what happened where did he go.

Well. It turns out she married a boy right because the boy has mommy now and the boys off doing his thing. But unless unless the male Cleaves takes the wife in this may not go on. What we find in counseling all the time the Rosemead school psychology - 90 percent of the cases in marital therapy the females pursuing the man. The man's running away from the female it's the woman who's trying to drag him into therapy. Very infrequent do you ever see a man dragging his wife into therapy. You know when we only see that usually is when she says that's it I've had it. I'm fed up. Right. And then he panics. "Oh you know he's watching the TV. You're leaving. No no no I'm calling the counselor!" He's panicking because he's losing mom.

We see this and I won't run through the text but I could run through now and if you want you can get the book or whatever that we're writing the Old Testament wisdom literature talks so much about the man cleaving to the wife let letting her you know her breast be his delight always that he's to cleave to her to take her in. The New Testament talks about the man that he nourishes and cares for his wife like his own body. He takes her in. What I'm interested in is this. We know this for marriage but this concept of man's With-ness is also universally used by Paul in the New Covenant to apply to the church after applying this creation account to affirm distinctions in gender roles in 1 Corinthians 11. Paul now is going to apply this to men and women in general.

It's interesting whenever Paul resolves some male/female issue he usually goes back to the creation account to somehow resolve it. Here's what he says. However in the Lord this is not marriage now. This is universalist for everyone in the Lord. Neither is woman independent that is separate from man nor is man independent of the woman. Paul uses these creation metaphors to establish his point of mutual dependence namely women owing her existence to man by creation. Right Adam was created first woman taking out of her and woman and man owes his life to women by birth.

But this is not merely to establish their natural dependence - that's obvious - but rather these illustrations are used to point out that in the Lord that is now in Christ and in the church man and woman are independent interdependent and need one another to fulfill Christ purposes in the church. Man's with-ness dimension regarding his wife is now universalized in the New Covenant Church to apply to embracing women in general in Christ. Again this is pretty radical for first century when you think of particularly Roman and Greek views of male and female that that a Roman would never think that man is interdependent and and and can't exist without woman that that would be absurd to him. Woman's interdependence with man is qualified by her having been and this is from verse 9 created for the man and originating from him. He is as much dependent upon her for his completion in the New Covenant as was true from the creation account it is not good that man is alone. That still applies to the church but now in just a more universal way not just for marriage but now one to another in the body for this completion and mutual dependence to occur man must take great efforts in the church in marriage to be with her

to embrace her and to psychologically remain in her presence for these interpersonal dynamics to take place. It is very difficult for husbands to really psychologically embrace their wives any husband who does that is going to go on a psychological journey whether he likes it or not.

It's very difficult for businessmen to embrace and cleave to women. It's very difficult for some pastors to cleave to women but this is the core of the complementary view. That's what we're advocating. The complementary view where somehow men and women bring something different to the table without which we cannot be who we are for the church. Here men spiritually embracing women in the church for the sake of mutual growth in union with the living Christ. The vice propensity now as we go through some of these traits we'll talk about vices, that is, with every trait here there's going to be in the fall because of sin and original sin there's going to be a disposition or a propensity a temptation towards some vice in this area.

So the vice propensity or temptation in the fall regarding man's capacity for with-ness is that he will either crush, ignore, or in some way fail to psychologically cleave to the female or his wife or so he's either going to distance himself from her in some fashion or he's going to cleave to her minimally to meet all of his needs without being a man - without taking responsibility for her. This is really the child. This is the child who's cleaving to the woman to get those needs met and yet he's not a man yet able to meet her needs, so in this case the man may fail to cleave in some manner and fail to initiate this process on account of perhaps the females overwhelming needs and her unwillingness to look out for his good.

In this case the calculating man this isn't the virtuous man. This is the calculating man - he, embracing her jeopardizes his potential selfish preoccupation with his own needs. He's not sure he wants to embrace her because to embrace her might mean I'm not coming out of this tonight. I want to go to bed I want to live my own life and if I really embrace her I may go on a psychological journey and exploration that I just don't want to go on. Sometimes when I come home from work it's late at night, my eyes are kind of glazed.

I kind of want to turn on the boob tube as I'm going for the tube. There's Gretta as hungry relational eyes: Hi John. Hi Grett. I don't even necessarily want to contact those eyes because I don't necessarily want to relational connect because that might take us on an hour conversation and I want to zone out in front of the boob tube and so some men feel like embracing them might jeopardize it. Especially the more needy the woman is. The more they they do take a risk if they really embrace that woman and go on a journey together in Christ.

The woman in turn can feel used by this type of male as if her existence was just to serve his goals outside of a relationship of interdependence. This may take the shape of the domineering male who is threatened by the woman's presence or seeks to use her. However it can also take the face of the face of the sheepish man who is merely withdrawn into himself. His entertainment or his work and has abdicated his responsibility to be involved with the woman's life. He just

doesn't want to deal with it so he he almost rather live a little bit of a separate life as a result the relational dynamics become dominated by the feminine alone resulting in a loss of complementarity relationship in which both genders bring this unique element to the relationship.

In general I want to say about with-ness this: a whole range of capacities traits and virtues flow from this: As man is responsible to be with woman so he is responsible to God as I'll talk the representative ruler of the earth. The exemplar sacrificial worker of the earth for the welfare of all to the glory of God. He is to be willing to take responsibility to tell the truth. We're going to see man as a truth teller. Yet in such a way that indicates that he's incomplete that in such a way that he needs the other he needs to be strong but he also discovers that eschatologically he is also the bride of Christ. And so by cleaving to a woman what he's going to discover is something within himself that is called to the same devout life that the woman exemplifies. We'll discuss each of these in turn. So Judy you can share for us.

- TenElshof:

The with-ness and foreignness that John has coined is something that I probably if I had first read him wouldn't have totally embraced and understood except that about five years ago my husband and I jumped into something that was bigger than either one of us and I suddenly knew that our relationship was going to take some new form. And we began praying eight years ago for us to do something that was meaningful in the Kingdom together. He's been in the corporate world. I've been in ministry. We wanted to bring those two worlds together somehow. And we

prayed for it for a long time and then God gave me a vision for what it should be. And I think the vision came through me because of one of my gender related characteristics that we'll get to in a little while of a female devotion. And I think God just brought that to me. And even though my husband came alongside and was I was excited and we start to move forward in this vision, the further we got it the further the Lord took us then deeper we had to go with him because it felt like it was so impossible for either of us to do alone or without God.

And I can remember just recently Jean coming home from a trip or he called me while he was gone. I can't remember if he told me when he came home or when it was or if it was on the phone but he said I had a dream last night and I said what he said "Man I dreamed something happened to you" and I said you know I know I said whenever you he says I don't know what I would do with The Hilltop without you and I said I feel the same way I am worried about what will happen to you because I can't do it without you. And that, his embracing of me has helped me to embrace these words more of being able to be for him. And just this last weekend I knew he was going to have to carry the burden of what God gave to me with two other couples who could be responsible to to do so much for this vision that God has given us and it made me pray for him.

And I was so incredibly proud and wanted to lift him up and say thank you Lord for what you've done in his life because he was so able to carry the load that I couldn't carry because he had to be with the men I was with the females. He had to carry what God worked through me to someone

else who could be so vital in the ministry. This with and for, I'm beginning to feel it and sense that I know it in a greater sense than we ever are, than I ever have before. And I see how it's just given such depth to our relationship with Christ more than ever before. I know we're still just skimming the surface but we talk about God more than we ever ever have in our relationship. We go to him more than we ever ever have in our relationship. We're praying about the same things. We're in it together. So this for-ness as you as you women first hear this, there's a part of you that wants to say "No!" And I just want to say the more you practice it the more your you bring out that embracing that your husband will do with you.

And let me describe it for you. The woman's capacity for for-ness most centrally captures her nature. She alone was created for the other and thus is that individual of the gender pair that was explicitly made for the purpose of complimenting the other. The creation account is clear on that point. God created Eve specifically for Adam so that he would not be alone - as stated in Genesis 2:18. Unlike the other animals who are taken out of the ground, woman was taken out of man. And as such is suitable for him in order to complete him.

The fact of her being created second impresses upon her the reality that she is for the sake of the other. Now the other meaning both man and God. Like man, all that she does must be conditioned by this relational dimension: He with her; And she for him: All in Christ. Paul reiterates these claims in 1 Corinthians 11 where he universe Eliza's insights on male female from the Creation account to male female relations in Christ. Paul states "for man does not

originate from the woman but woman from man. For indeed man was created not created" - almost that a Freudian slip there - "for indeed man was NOT created for the woman's sake but woman for the man's sake."

That's 1 Corinthians 11:9 women you are just pick it up and read it and say "What does that speak to my soul? What does it say that we were created for his sake? Paul's use of the Greek accusative case of woman and man clearly points out the idea that woman was created because of, for the sake of, an account of the man. This statement is so clear and yet so often ignored by those writing and gender because it's hard to hear. We don't want to be told that we were created for someone else. We want to be created for ourselves and so it's so easily to get caught up in the world's definition of what gender means.

Clearly women's teleology and purpose, our end goal, in part - not all of it - but in part has to do with being for the man not merely in the family but particularly in the Lord. For the purpose of helping actualize the union of man and woman with Christ in the church. See when we really live out the foreignness then we bring unity to the relationship. If we try to be what he is there is no unity. We're standing alongside of each other but we're not coming together and forming a oneness. When you form oneness you need to complement not be the same.

Woman's foreignness does not render her inferior to man. Key statement: Because we are created for the man doesn't mean that we're inferior. Rather she is the relational other who is sufficiently more than or different to man in order to complete him yet not so different that she isn't an unsuitable helper to him. For Paul poor male and female are so radically interdependent both in creation and in the Lord that neither can realize themselves apart from the other. One of the things I work with in counseling more than anything else is trying to get people to be more intimate. You know everybody wants to know what does intimacy mean what does it look like. How do we do it. How do we experience it. We want it. And in their head what they have is these relational scenes we see on television and in the movies and all those things are this incredibly romantic love.

And that's what we think intimacy is. Instead interdependence or intimacy is the ability or ability to be dependent and independent. And we bring the two together to be interdependent if you've never had an experience of being dependent on someone - if there's never been anyone in your life that was trustworthy enough for you to be able to place yourself in their care as a child with your parent. Or maybe someone in your church that has come alongside you and mentored you. They're so trustworthy that you can really be dependent on them to tell them what's in your soul. That's dependency. You know that sense that you can really know that they're there.

But we also need that experience. You know that that we should go through an adolescence but oftentimes don't. Of that sense of knowing what it's like to be independent separate from that

dependency. That we have giftedness and things inside of us that we can begin to express on our own. And you bring those two things together dependence and independence to make interdependence which helps you to have intimacy because you again come together in unity and unite and have a relational experience.

And it's going to take both of those experiences to be able to experience intimacy. So if you haven't had those you're gonna have to work on them. When I got married I didn't know what it meant to be independent. My husband didn't know very much about dependence and we had to learn that within that relationship and it's a whole story how we learned that. But that's what it's gonna have to take in order for us to be faithful to our gender because there is no way that I'm going to be for someone else if I've never had anybody I could trust. And you aren't going to embrace somebody else if you have never learned how to depend on anyone else because men need women. But our culture said you don't need anyone and so learning how to depend is gonna be difficult.

Now the temptation for the woman and for-ness what is there her vice propensity? In general for women. It's quite obvious what they do. She will not live for the other but for herself or in some cases for the need to be needed. When I didn't know how to be independent I didn't have that experience or in my marriage. I just wanted to be needed. I didn't want him to leave. I was clingy. It's a subtle way to appear to be for the other person while living for oneself. I was really living to get my own needs met.

In recoiling from her hurts and particularly the man's selfishness, rejection, and unwillingness to cleave to her, she may decide that it is either not possible or worth the emotional cost to live for the man. As a result a deep relational cleavage occurs in the home. Or if it's happening in society or the church for she thought she models fallen man's attempt to find personal identity in human autonomy in the self. I can do it alone. I can do it by myself. I don't need you and I'm not going to be for you. And you begin to meet your needs and isolation.

Now there's also a temptation to try to remedy this in the wrong way. So then we and I think we must clearly see this in the church. At home you you've decided to sort of live for yourself and be alongside him and not be for him and then you go to church and what do you do? You force yourself into service for the other. Say I'm supposed to be submissive. I'm supposed to look submissive so he looks like Man of the House and so you do all the right things and you know just what to do to look that way. But the only way to remedy living for yourself is through brokenness, through repentance and get back to that relationship in Christ. He isn't always going to be perfectly embracing you and still if we can live for him even in our silence. It says in Scripture it'll be the strongest thing to pull him back to his love for you.

Now there are some women who have experienced things early early on and it's caused a hurt to her own identity and that often comes in relationship to her father. If the father's relationship

with a woman was not a trustworthy one and she was not embraced by her father. She will put up boundaries and protect herself and very much into survival mode and she really doesn't feel she has any value and there is no reason why he would ever love her. And so even if he does there's a sense that he can't get through to her. In those kind of relationships, she can just begin to imagine every other relationships. We call that way, that she turns to other relationships to get her needs met and she's so hollow inside that she does a lot for her employer or her for the church or for other places trying to get that need met inside. And she has no boundaries out there but the boundaries with the person who she needs she could receive love from she keeps very very much in place because she's afraid.

She's nurturing and she does the kind of things that for-ness requires. But she doesn't do it with the one that could bring her the most love. And she's not able to love her father in heaven either or to receive His love in a way that could be helpful. And so I want you to know that this for-ness is not an easy thing. It can go wrong in many many ways. And it's part of searching our soul to see what Christ wants to do to correct whatever wasn't right.

And that's why the community of the body of the saints the whole that's why we need community in our church because that is the healing factor for us is to be able to connect with people who are trustworthy and when they aren't. It's OK to tell them and work it out because it's we're all going to be not trustworthy at some point but can we hear that we aren't and then work through it. That's the important thing.

Those are the overall characteristics the with-ness and the for-ness are the primary characteristics and then we want to break that down. But I'm wondering if we shouldn't take a break. It's about 20 after 8:00. And so let's have, how long do you need to go? Fifteen minutes. Let's come back at twenty five two and then we'll get into some more specific traits for you.