

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

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DIFFERENCE?

*Manhood and Womanhood
Defined According to the Bible*

STUDY GUIDE DEVELOPED BY DESIRING GOD

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What's the Difference?

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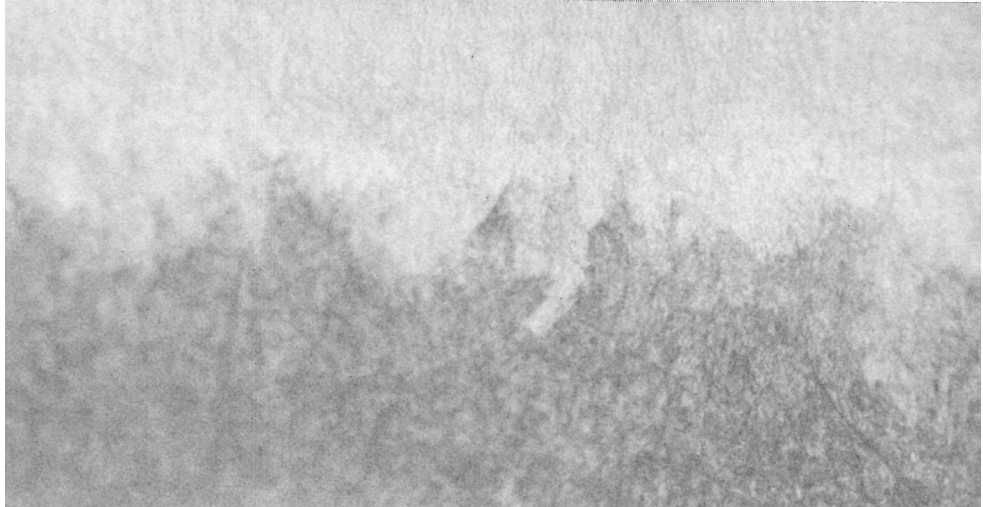
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INTRODUCTION TO THIS STUDY GUIDE

THE TOPIC OF HUMAN SEXUALITY is as unavoidable as is our own sexual identity as male or female persons. What does it mean to be a man? What does it mean to be a woman? Are men and women equal? Are men and women different? Should men and women have distinctive roles within the family or within the church? These are questions in contemporary evangelicalism and in our society that need to be answered. The church cannot remain "neutral" on this issue; it must take a stand one way or another.

The issue is important for a number of reasons. Aside from the practical concerns for parenting, leading the church, relating in a marriage, and responding to homosexuality, the topic of human sexuality is tied to biblical authority and hermeneutics. Wayne Grudem explains:

In the widely influential blog "Together for the Gospel," Mark Dever, senior pastor of Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington, DC, recently wrote:

"It is my best and most sober judgment that this position [egalitarianism] is effectively an undermining of—a breach in—the authority of Scripture. . . . It seems to me and others (many who are younger than myself) that *this issue of egalitarianism and complementarianism is increasingly acting as the watershed distinguishing those who will accommodate Scripture to culture, and those who will attempt to shape culture by Scripture.* You may disagree, but this is our honest concern before God. It is no lack of charity, nor honesty. It is no desire for power or tradition for tradition's sake. It is our sober conclusion from observing the last 50 years. . . .

Of course there are issues more central to the gospel than gender issues. However, *there may be no way the authority of Scripture is being undermined more quickly or more thoroughly in our day than through the hermeneutics of egalitarian readings of the Bible.* And when the authority of Scripture is undermined, the gospel will not long be acknowledged."¹

Throughout this study guide you will have the opportunity to test Mark Dever's warning, as you will learn about egalitarianism and complementarianism and how each view seeks to support its understanding of masculinity and femininity.

Perhaps most importantly, however, the issue of manhood and womanhood, and male and female roles, is related to the glory of God. It is related to our joyful reflections of that glory, created in the image of God as male and female persons. Therefore, it is our hope that you will not only come to solid, biblical convictions on what it means to be a man or a woman, and a husband or a wife, but also that you will gladly live out this biblical vision to the glory of God.

This study guide is designed to be used in a twelve-session,² guided group study that focuses on the *What's the Difference?*

Manhood, and Womanhood Defined According to the Bible DVD set.³ After an introductory lesson, each subsequent lesson examines one 25-minute session⁴ from *What's the Difference?* You, the learner, are encouraged to prepare for the viewing of each session by reading and reflecting upon Scripture, by considering key quotations, and by asking yourself penetrating questions. Your preparatory work for each lesson is marked with the heading "Before You Watch the DVD, Study and Prepare" in Lessons 2-11.

The workload is conveniently divided into five daily (and manageable) assignments. There is also a section suggesting further study. This work is to be completed individually before the group convenes to view the DVD and discuss the material.

Throughout this study guide, paragraphs printed in a shaded box like this one are excerpts from a book written by John Piper (or, occasionally another author), or excerpts taken from the *Desiring God* Web site. They are included to supplement the study questions and to summarize key or provocative points.

The second section in Lessons 2-11, entitled "Further Up and Further In," is designed for the learner who wants to explore the concepts and ideas introduced in the lesson in greater detail. This section is not required, but will deepen your understanding of the material.

The third section in Lessons 2-11, entitled "While You Watch the DVD, Take Notes," is to be completed as the DVD is playing. This section includes fill-in-the-blanks and leaves space for note-taking. You are encouraged to engage with the DVD by filling in the appropriate blanks and writing down other notes that will aid you in the group discussion.

The fourth section in each normal lesson is "After You Watch the DVD, Discuss What You've Learned." Three discussion questions are provided to guide and focus the conversation. You may record, in the spaces provided, notes that will help you contribute to the conversation. Or you may use this space to record things from the discussion that you want to remember.

The final section is an application section: "After You Discuss, Make Application." You will be challenged to record a "take-away point" and to engage in a certain activity that is a fitting response to the content presented in the lesson.

Group leaders will want to find the Leader's Guide, included at the end of this study guide, immediately.

Life transformation will only occur by the grace of God. Therefore, we highly encourage you to seek the Lord in prayer throughout the learning process. Pray that God would open your eyes to see wonderful things in his Word. Pray that he would grant you the insight and concentration you need in order to get the most from this resource. Pray that God would cause you not merely to understand the truth, but also to rejoice in it. And pray that the discussion in your group would be mutually encouraging and edifying. We've included objectives at the beginning of each lesson. These objectives won't be realized without the gracious work of God through prayer.

NOTES

1. Mark Dever, as quoted by Grudem in *Evangelical Feminism: A New Path to Liberalism?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006), 18-19. See Grudem's footnote for the bibliographic information.
2. While this study guide is ideally suited for a twelve-session study, it is possible to complete it in six sessions. For instructions on how to use this study guide for a six-session group study, turn to Appendix A: Six-Session Intensive Option.

3. Although this resource is designed to be used in a group setting, it can also be used by the independent learner. Such a learner would have to decide how to use this resource in the most beneficial way. We would suggest doing everything but the group discussion, if possible.
4. Twenty-five minutes is only an approximation. Some sessions are longer; others are shorter.



LESSON 1

INTRODUCTION TO *WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE? MANHOOD AND WOMANHOOD DEFINED ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE*

LESSON OBJECTIVES

It is our prayer that after you have finished this lesson . . .

- > You will get a feel for how you and others in your group approach the issue of manhood and womanhood.
- > Your curiosity would be roused, and questions would begin to come to mind.
- > You will be eager to learn more about how you can live your life to the glory of God as a man or as a woman.

ABOUT YOURSELF

- 1) What is your name?

- 2) Tell the group something about yourself that they probably don't already know.

- 3) What are you hoping to learn from this group study?

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

A PREVIEW OF *WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?*

1) What conceptions does our culture have of what manhood and womanhood are? What stereotypes of manhood and womanhood do you see in movies, on television, in magazines, or on the internet? According to our culture, how does a man express his masculinity? How does a woman express her femininity?

2) What, if anything, does the Christian church teach about manhood and womanhood? Do different churches communicate different messages about manhood and womanhood? If so, what are those different messages?