



Male and Female Differences: Part 1 – Debunking the “Men are Visual” Lie

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The Problem:

The belief that God made men visual is a myth that has been directed at congregations for years. Churches and ministries alike have been troubled with the vast number of men addicted to porn and didn't know how to explain it. Blaming immodest women has been the catch-all explanation for why “good” men stumble and is used as an excuse for Christian men to explain why they had a moment of weakness when they submitted to lustful thoughts after being visually aroused, which led to masturbation or viewing porn.

Popular books have been written to teach men to “bounce their eyes”, when faced with visual temptation. However, instead of addressing the deeper issue concerning how men view women, contemporary Christian self-help advice has been to remove the stimuli from man's visual perception, which is quite different from Christ's directive to pluck out the eye if it causes one to sin (Mathew 5:27-28). Jesus uses this hyperbole to stress the seriousness of sinning with one's eyes, as it has the potential for men to not only commit adultery when they lust by looking at other women, but how they view women's bodies in general. But for those in Christ, the Holy Spirit gives men and women the power to resist that temptation and escape it (1 Cor 10:13). Jesus says that when one is born again, they are born of the Spirit (John 3:5-8) and the Spirit will take up residence or dwell in them (John 14:17). When one is born of the Spirit, they are called to live by the Spirit (Gal 5:25). Since Christ's death buys the body and soul of those he saves, their body is now a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19-20). According to Galatians 5, Christ sets one free from gratifying the desires of the flesh since the flesh is against the Spirit (Gal 5:16). When one walks by the Spirit (Gal 5:25), He enables Christians who lust with their eyes the ability to no longer gratify the desires of the flesh (Gal 5:16) or to be enticed by one's own desires (James 1:14). For this to occur, there needs to be a transforming of the mind so that men and women can present their whole bodies, not just their spiritual practices, as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is true *spiritual worship* (Roman 12:2).

The problem with so many who struggle with visual temptations is the assumption that if they just get married, they can use their eyes for sexual arousal directed at their wives. Husbands who have bought into the ‘men are visual’ myth will mislead their wives that visual arousal is a reality of being a man, insinuating that God made them to be visually sexually aroused. The wife will then take it upon herself to do all she can to keep her husband physically attracted to her body, placing on herself a burden of insecurity that redeemed women aren't meant to carry. She will convince herself this burden is Biblical submission by combining Ephesians 5:22-24 with 1 Corinthians 7:4. Sadly, it's all a facade that is revealed not only in the context of Christian



gatherings but in daily encounters when there are younger, prettier, less modest women roaming within the vicinity of her husband's gaze.

Many erroneously believe that in order for men to truly appreciate their wife's beauty, they must be visually stimulated at all times. Men rely on this misunderstanding as a means to explain their sexual arousal when they are near their wife or when they think about their wives sexually. However, men don't need a lie to do this. Husband's, out of their love, respect, admiration, and their wife's total essence, should provoke sexual arousal. To believe the lie deflates all these qualities.

The problem with holding on to or affirming the lie is that it gives men permission to sin when their visual senses are not exclusively stimulated by their wives, but by other female forms they find attractive. Taking note of the beauty of God's creation in the human body, which is made in His image and is a temple of God's Spirit (1 Cor 6:19) is meant to provoke us to worship. Unfortunately, men are rarely worshiping God when they are being visually stimulated by other women's' bodies. Because of humanity's sin nature, visual stimulation that leads to arousal is not "appreciating beauty". Instead of using one's bodily visual sensory perception created by God for worship, they will use it to commit adultery in their minds and then expect their wives to "finish the job" to relieve them. Men who believe the 'men are visual' lie have turned the female form into a sight sin, placing the burden on their wife to make sure he does not sin physically. If she is unable to have sex as much as he desires because he's easily aroused in the public square, he will use her as a scapegoat and see himself as a victim.

"It's my wife's fault that I check out other women"

"If only she would have sex more often...then I wouldn't be looking at porn"

The Created Male Brain

Genesis 1:26 says that God told the Son and Holy Spirit,

"Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps the earth."

God made man from matter, which Scripture calls 'dust', while breathing life into him, literally jump starting, or animating his brain, nervous system, senses and all the biological and cognitive components of the human body that makes a living being. Many in the church avoid learning about these components due to a fear of reducing God's creation of man (reductionist view) as *simply an interesting collection of chemicals and electrical impulses.*¹¹ This approach fails to take into account that God created the whole man, body and soul, a complete living being that includes a beautiful complex collection of chemical and electrical activity that makes the heart beat, the respiratory system breath, the digestive systems churn, the sexual reproductive system arouse and create, the nervous system sense, while the brain records and stores memories to recollect.



In Genesis 2:7 we see a clear distinction between the origin of the body and the origin of soul, formed out of pre-existing God-made material.[\[2\]](#) The soul, however, is not made of pre-existing material. It is made with God's very breath, which transformed a clay pot, in all its intricate body parts and body systems into a human creature, a living being, made in His own image.

Christians tend to focus only on what Christ did to the soul when he died on the cross, propitiating for our sin and our sin nature, reconciling us to the Father. This extravagant yet limited focus often neglects how a regenerated new birthed soul (a one-time work of God) impacts what we do with redeemed transforming bodies, where our sin nature will continue to exist, but will have no power to reign (Romans 6). Since one cannot reset their body to factory pre-Fall settings, transformation is a process that includes using our bodies and our minds for righteousness, providing evidence that a new birth has indeed occurred. We cannot separate the body from the soul, nor emphasize the soul over the body. God's work in salvation through Christ bought both body and soul.

The problem with overlooking how God created man's body to interact with the environment that He created, we miss crucial components to living an embodied Christian life today. Psalms 139:14 reminds us that the body that God created is wonderfully and fearfully made, yet Christians don't spend enough time understanding how the body works, except for purposes of vanity. As re-born believers, it is important to have knowledge of the working of a unified body and mind, in relation to the soul. Louis Berkhof, in his hearty Systematic Theology, writes

“Every act of man is seen as an act of the whole man. It is not the soul, but the man that sins; it is not the body, but the man that dies; and it is not merely the soul, but the man, body, and soul, that is redeemed in Christ”

After God turned matter into the man-creature, He put him into the garden to work (Gen 2:15) giving specific do/don't directions concerning the work man was created for. Because God gave man His breath, stamping man with His image, this reveals that man stood at the apex of all that God had created.[\[3\]](#) Man was given dominion (Gen 1:26, 28) over all the lower creatures, however, this high-ranking zoologist position also came with managerial botanist duties (Gen 2:5-9).

Man's work consisted of evaluating, analyzing, and noticing the movement of every beast and bird that God brought to Adam's gaze in order to name them (Gen 2:18). This explains why neuroscience research has recognized that the male brain is visuospatial, not visual. Visuospatial is the cognitive (thinking) process to identify, integrate and analyze space and form, details and structure, while simultaneously determining spatial relationships among objects.

Visuospatial abilities include distinct factors like spatial visualization (the ability to manage spatial stimuli) or rotation, be it object-based (mental rotation) or subject-based (perspective taking, or mentally turning oneself in relation to the environment). Visuospatial abilities have been consistently related to large-scale abilities like environment learning. [\[4\]](#)

These God given cognitive factors enabled Adam to explore and interpret his surroundings and environment that were not yet distorted by sin. It would be fair to speculate that when God



brought the animals to Adam to name, he did not give them a once over and decide on a name for each animal by mere visual observation. Adam had to interact with each animal, touch it, smell it, and used all his newly God-created senses and visuospatial male thinking brain abilities to objectively identify a fitting name for each animal by determining the relationship that the animal in question had to the earth, to other animals, and to himself. This God-imaging human quality was given to Adam to perform the very tasks God required of him.

Historical philosophers, early church theologians, and contemporary researchers have sought to better understand this very male characteristic. Many have looked to explain how the male visuospatial capacity expresses itself in real time, recognizing there are specific male/female differences in the way men and women process stimuli (environmental information taken in by the senses). Historically, these differences were explained via misogynistic theories that had a tendency to elevate the man while denigrating the woman. Since no one has been able to explain why sensory perception differences exist (will be discussed in part 3), contemporary studies shifted their focus. Instead of looking for the origin of male/female differences, the shift looked at skill and ability, specifically how it impacts intellect and aptitude as it pertains to the relationship between visuospatial and mathematical skills [\[5\]](#) or complex math problem solving ability. [\[6\]](#) The theory that boys or men are better at math and science was continually reinforced.

However, feminist movements have gained the attention of researchers who have debunked that theory. In their attempt to close the gap between gender differences, they incentivized math and science classes to girls. Interestingly, even though studies have been able to “*suggest that men and women on the whole possess an equal aptitude for math and science*” as women enter more STEM vocations, nevertheless, researchers still have acknowledged “*that men tend to have a slight edge when it comes to visuospatial skills*”. [\[7\]](#) This reveals that visuospatial ability does not necessarily have anything to do with having math and science intellect or aptitude. Rather, it reveals that God created differences in the way boys and men process sensory perceptions inherently from girls and women.

Despite contemporary studies that prove women can perform in math just as well as men, research continues to reveal that men outperform women on spatial ability tasks [\[8\]](#). These differences show up as early as 3-5 months for baby boys, continuing on until the man is 95 years of age [\[9\]](#). Furthermore, this ability is not reserved for societies influenced by Western philosophy. One such study analyzed the spatial visual capability of approximately 110,000 men and 90,000 women across 53 nations, with results confirming that men performed better than women at visuospatial tasks, which they are unable to explain. [\[10\]](#)

“*Explanations for such differences have focused on a number of possible causal factors, including distal factors (e.g., biological evolution, the cultural evolution of gender roles) and more proximate causes (e.g., the effects of sex-linked abilities and interests, prenatal and post-pubertal sex steroid hormones, gender roles, gender socialization, and gender stereotypes)*” [\[11\]](#)

Failing to consider a divine cause, secular researchers are consistent to look to evolutionary theories for answers. They will promote the belief that ancestral men developed, out of necessity, a three-dimensional visuospatial specialization skill to track, hunt and target moving objects and



ancestral women were forced to develop memory accuracy in object locations in group settings, which made them more socialized. Other researchers blame sex hormones that contribute to visuospatial differences, especially since hormones are more salient at certain prenatal, perinatal, and puberty developmental stages. When God's creation account is not considered to explain differences in male and female sense perception, Christians are left looking for answers that are often not helpful and can actually be harmful in considering how the image of God shows up in both man and woman.

Another unfortunate reality is the glossing over or minimizing of the cognitive functions needed for Adam to fulfill his divine duty of naming God's creation and managing God's garden. Many Christians tend to over-modernize when God made the woman and brought her to Adam. Scripture does not hint that Adam said "wow, look at her body parts". Scripture doesn't even tell us that he marveled at her beauty because there was no other woman to compare her beauty to, meaning Adam had no frame of reference to determine what was beautiful in a woman compared to what was not. Adam's response appropriately fits with the task and duties God had already given him, using the skills he had already been using to analyze and name the lower creatures of God's creations mentioned in Gen 1:26, 28 and 2:19-20.

In *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, Ray Ortland Jr. reveals what an over-modernized encounter analysis looks like when he describes man meeting woman for the first time. He writes,

"Imagine the scene: As the last of the beasts plods off with its new name, the man turns away with a trace of perplexity and sorrow in his eyes. God says, "Son, I want you to lie down. Now close your eyes and sleep." The man falls into a deep slumber. The Creator goes to work, opening the man's side, removing a rib, closing the wound, and building the woman. There she stands, perfectly gorgeous and uniquely suited to the man's need. The Lord says to her, "Daughter, I want you to go stand over there. I'll come for you in a moment." She obeys. Then God touches the man and says, "Wake up now, son. I have one last creature for you to name. I'd like to know what you think of this one." And God leads Eve out to Adam, who greets her with rhapsodic relief"

Ortland seems to suggest that the naming of the animals was an insignificant task, which it wasn't, and the only reason God made man name the animals was so that man would realize that he was sadly and perplexedly alone. However, Scripture says God is the one who said – בָּנָא – that man should not be alone. Ortland's interpretation and imagination reeks of a contemporary male projected emotional response on to Adam, at the expense of baptizing the idea that God made man to marvel at a woman's body. Moses penned Genesis several generations removed from the creation account and God did not allow Moses to have imaginative liberties with what he wrote concerning this first encounter between man and woman. Scripture is clear that it was God who determined Adam needed a counterpart, not Adam.

And the man said "This time, bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: this one shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.



These are the first recorded human words in the Bible, which is fitting because Adam is interacting with another human being. This is not to say that Adam had not been openly communicating with God, we just don't have any record of what that divine/human being dialogue consisted of.

The original rendering of Adam's words begins with 'This time', which "translates a phrase that literally means 'at this repetition' (see Exod. 8:32; 9:14; Deut. 9:19; 10:10). After God had brought all the animals to man, at last man sees a creature corresponding to him. She is 'bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh'. This is an expression occurring throughout Scripture signifying essence and oneness (compare Judg. 9:2; 1 Chr. 11:1)." [\[12\]](#)

Adam had been studying, analyzing, organizing, and using his visuospatial skills to name the birds, the livestock, and all the creeping things that God had created on the earth. Adam's God given task revealed how God created the male brain to work. When Adam was presented with God's last creation, another created being that came from his own body, Adam knew she was different from all the other creatures he had observed, analyzed and named. Adam finished his task of naming [\[13\]](#) by calling her "woman". The etymology of the word Adam used to name woman, *'iśāh* ('woman') was a result of the fact that she was taken out of *'iś* ('man'). The etiological repetition of the terms used to reflect that he knew, analyzed and organized in his mind that this woman (her) was caused by and connected to this man (him), in other words, he knew that her physical being was like his own. [\[14\]](#) Even though woman was the last of God's creation, she was not the least or the most subordinate of God's creation, nor was she just eye candy for the man to satisfy his visual senses.

When the Lord brought the animals to Adam, the man recognized his own uniqueness and difference.....It is against this background that the woman was formed and brought to the man. The man and the woman are set over against the rest of creation. The words of verse 18 are repeated here for emphasis: 'But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him' (2:20). 'Helper' is not a demeaning term. It is often used to describe God (Exod. 18:4). The helper provides what (God said) is lacking. 'Comparable to him' means not so much identical to him as a counterpart to him. She shared the man's nature but she did more: she complemented him. What he lacked she supplied, and what she lacked he supplied. They provided mutual support. She was in no sense inferior or second-rate. [\[15\]](#)

She was taken out of man's side (2:21-22), not because she is lower than man but because she was made of the same matter as man. God created the first woman with a brain; a nervous system; and internal organs, just like the man, minus the reproductive ones, which God made perfectly suited for a woman for a purpose. God also gave her a sense perception that functioned like the man's but perceived and processed information differently, but not in anyway that made her inferior (will be discussed in part 2). It is only when we get to Genesis 3, when the serpent was tempting Eve, do we see the visual senses used to sin against God.

Furthermore, one commentary says

'Side' is a better translation than 'rib'. The same word is used of the side of the ark of the covenant and the side of a building or mountain. Nowhere else is it translated 'rib'. The verb



‘made’ is the common word for ‘build’. It is used here of God’s creative activity as in Amos 9:6.[\[16\]](#)

Mathew Henry’s commentary states

That the woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam; not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved [\[17\]](#)

One of the fullest depictions of that first interaction between man and woman is best described in Victor Hamilton’s commentary on Genesis. He writes,

“the phrase “my/your bone and flesh” is actually a covenant formula and that it speaks not of a common birth but of a common, reciprocal loyalty. Thus when representatives of the northern tribes visit David at Hebron and say to him, “we are your bone and flesh” (2 Sam. 5:1), this is not a statement of relationship (“we have the same roots”) but a pledge of loyalty (“we will support you in all kinds of circumstances”). Taken this way, the man’s ‘this one, this time, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh’ becomes a covenantal statement of his commitment to her. Thus it would serve as the biblical counterpart to the modern marriage ceremony, “in weakness [i.e., flesh] and in strength [i.e., bone].” Circumstances will not alter the loyalty and commitment of the one to the other. So understood, the verse does not attribute strength to the man and weakness to the woman, as if he is the embodiment of bone and she is the embodiment of flesh. Both the man and the woman share the entire spectrum of human characteristics, from strong to weak. [\[18\]](#)

What God did in creating man and woman is spectacularly significant and by this great act He reveals how man and woman are to view each other.

Matt Smith, a pastor of a church in San Diego says this about God’s work in creation:

This is the eyewitness account of Special Creation

The specialness of God is seen in matter

The specialness of matter is seen in Man

The specialness of Man is seen in Woman

The specialness of Woman is seen in Mankind

[\[1\]](#) Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, vol. 1, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1987), 60.



[2] Berkhof, L. (2018). *Systematic Theology*. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

[3] Berkhof, L. (2018). *Systematic Theology*. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

[4] Feraco, T., Bonvento, M., & Meneghetti, C. (2021). *Orienteering: What relation with visuospatial abilities, wayfinding attitudes, and environment learning?* Wiley Online Library.

[5] Hawes, Z., & Ansari, D. (2020, January 21). *What explains the relationship between spatial and mathematical skills? A review of evidence from brain and behavior – psychonomic bulletin & review*. SpringerLink

[6] Ramírez-Uclés, I. M., & Ramírez-Uclés, R. (1AD, January 1). *Gender differences in visuospatial abilities and complex mathematical problem solving*. Frontiers. Retrieved February 18, 2022, from <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00191/full>

[7] American Psychological Association. (n.d.). *Think again: Men and women share cognitive skills*. American Psychological Association. Retrieved February 18, 2022, from <https://www.apa.org/topics/neuropsychology/men-women-cognitive-skills>

[8] Wei, W., Chen, C., & Zhou, X. (2016). *Spatial ability explains the male advantage in approximate arithmetic*. Frontiers.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Lippa, R. A., Collaer, M. L., & Peters, M. (2010). Sex differences in mental rotation and line angle judgments are positively associated with gender equality and economic development across 53 nations. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 39(4), 990–997. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-008-9460-8>

[11] Ibid.

[12] John D. Currid, *A Study Commentary on Genesis: Genesis 1:1–25:18*, vol. 1, EP Study Commentary (Darlington, England: Evangelical Press, n.d.), 112–113.

[13] Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 1, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1967), 71.

[14] John D. Currid, *A Study Commentary on Genesis: Genesis 1:1–25:18*, vol. 1, EP Study Commentary (Darlington, England: Evangelical Press, n.d.), 113.

[15]¹ Philip H. Eveson, *The Book of Origins: Genesis Simply Explained*, Welwyn Commentary Series (Darlington, England: Evangelical Press, 2001), 78.

[16] Philip H. Eveson, *The Book of Origins: Genesis Simply Explained*, Welwyn Commentary Series (Darlington, England: Evangelical Press, 2001), 79.



[17] Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 10.

[18] Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 179–180.