

TRUE MASCULINITY/TRUE FEMININITY

by Danny Carlton

The purpose of this paper is simply to define Masculinity and Femininity. The reason is to use those definitions in determining the proper behavior for men and women and how, if at all, that behavior differs. Defining Masculinity and Femininity is not as simple as looking into the nearest dictionary. These words have in common with several other words a certain slipperiness when trying to find a clear definition. Masculinity would most certainly be defined as "male behavior" but what exactly that behavior is and how it differs from Femininity is still unanswered. Going beyond mere dictionaries there remains an eternal definition of Masculinity and Femininity that rests in their original Purpose and Function intended by our Creator.

The goal of this paper is to, by understanding what Masculinity and Femininity are, use that knowledge in living our lives in the way that God intended men and women to live.

One constant obstacle to finding Truth is the varying definitions of words. In order to create a clear understanding of the message of this paper, several words will need to be defined. These definitions are by no means a statement of the "proper" meanings of these words but a description of my understanding of these words so when used you will understand what I am trying to communicate. Also several words have been capitalized in a way inconsistent with American grammar. This is for the purpose of emphasis on the importance of these words as complete ideas.

Ethics (another of those slippery words) as I understand its use, refers to Proper Human Behavior. I use the term *Physiological* to refer to that pertaining to the Functions of the human body. The term *Cognitive* refers to human thought and ways of thinking. *Affective* refers to human impressions, emotions, attitudes, and values. *Relational* refers to how people relate to one another. I use the word *Clue* to refer to things which can be used to point to Truth.

In determining what exactly Masculinity and Femininity are we will need first to recognise that in making this universe, the Lord did not use dice. Each object from the smallest sub-atomic particle to the largest stellar configuration has both a Function and a Purpose. We are no exception. Having a Function does not imply actually Functioning in that Proper way. Two types of creatures to our knowledge have a problem with Functioning properly. They are Fallen Angels and Mankind. The Purpose for both of these creatures still exists and their current Function gives clues to that Purpose even while not being Proper. We will look at four Function Clues and one other Clue to determine the purpose of Masculinity and Femininity in Humans (and thus their definitions). The four Function Clues are: Physiological Clues, Cognitive Clues, Affective Clues, and Relational Clues. The other Clue is quite simply Scriptural Clues which will be the most important Clue.

PHYSIOLOGICAL CLUES

Boys and girls are different. Most of us found that out at an early age. The list of differences goes on and on. In Anatomy and Biology scientists and doctors discover new differences every day. In order to save space I will try to sum up the differences as briefly and as accurately as I can.

Men are stronger than women. They possess roughly 50% more brute strength and 40% of their body weight is muscle as opposed to 23% in women. On the other hand women have a greater constitutional vitality than men, which gives them greater resistance to disease and an average life span of from 4 to 8 years longer. ¹

Women have a lower metabolism than men. They have smaller lungs and more water content in their blood. Their blood also contains 20% fewer red blood cells. But women also have larger kidneys, livers, stomachs, appendices and larger and more active thyroid glands. Men's and women's skeletal structures differ in some rather interesting ways. Women have shorter heads, broader faces with less protruding chins, shorter legs, longer trunks, smaller hands and feet and a different angle in the elbow joint.

What these Clues tell us is the Physical Functions that men and women were built to do. Women bear children and their bodies have been built to accommodate the extra needs that occur during pregnancy, childbirth and motherhood. With a greater constitutional vitality a woman can fight off not only the diseases

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that attack her body, but the diseases that attack her child's body. One reason breastfeeding is recommended by most doctors is because of the process where microorganisms that have infected the baby pass to the mother through the contact of his mouth to her breast, then the antibodies her body has developed to fight those microorganisms are transferred back to the baby in the milk her body has produced.

Having certain internal organs that are larger allows a pregnant woman's body to handle the extra load of another human body growing within hers and drawing sustenance from her.

The body of a man was not built to just impregnate women. His greater strength and higher metabolism allows him to work hard enough to provide for and protect not only himself but his wife and children. The smaller lung capacity and thinner blood of women implies not that women are not meant for hard work, but that men are equipped for more hard work.

The differing skeletal structure also shows the potential for varying Function. The different angle of the elbow joint is a fascinating display of specialization. A man's elbow points out while in a relaxed standing position. A woman's points either back or in. The result is a phenomenon that is frequently observed but rarely thought about. When learning to throw or run young girls must be coached on how to hold their arms because the natural movement is in the wrong direction. When trying to hold a young infant a man must pull his shoulder up into an uncomfortable position while a woman's arms and shoulders fold naturally into the proper position.

The conclusion that the Physiological Clues lead us to is that physically women have been created with a body that has been built with specialized Functions for pregnancy, childbirth and motherhood. Men have been created with a body that has been built with specialized Functions for being a husband and father. In a sense both Function as Protectors and Providers, but the woman in a close direct way and the man in an overall supportive way.

COGNITIVE CLUES

If you need affirmation that men and women think differently you need go no further than the nearest married couple. They will roll their eyes and say with a frustrated voice "Boy, do them!" Exactly what these differences are will be discussed in this section.

First of all there is a close resemblance between Cognitive and Affective Clues. Affective Clues will deal with Values, Attitudes, Emotions and Impressions. In this section the way of thinking and strengths and weaknesses will be the emphasis.

Our brains are conveniently divided into two halves: the right brain and the left brain. Through tests on stroke victims and people with damaged sections of their brain, scientists have determined that the right brain is the seat of concrete, mathematical, visual-spatial thought and the left brain is the seat of abstract, verbal thought.²

One story of a stroke victim who couldn't speak but could sing hymns that he'd learned before his stroke, demonstrates the way the right brain functions.

A test on men and women, who were asked to do two tasks, went as follows. The first task was to run mentally through the alphabet and count the number of letters, including the letter "e", that contain the sound "ee". The second task was to count the number of letters that contain curves when they are printed as capitals. Both tasks must be done completely mentally, without pencil or paper. On the average females did better on the first task, which required verbal skills, while men did better on the second task which requires visual-spatial skills.³

Further tests showed that while women are equal in functions of both sides of the brain, men are lateral, which means stronger on the right than on the left.

This sexually biased functioning of the brain has an immediate observable result. Being more verbally oriented, women are mentally equipped to deal better with people than with things. Being more mathematically and visual-spatially oriented men are mentally equipped to deal better with things rather than people. Basically women are people oriented and men are object oriented. A summation might be phrased in this way: While women are Cognitively equipped toward being the "Counselor", men are Cognitively equipped toward being the "Engineer".

AFFECTIVE CLUES

Measuring Affectiveness in a human being is difficult if at all possible. How does one measure something that has as part of its Function the ability to hide itself? If you ask someone how they feel about a certain something, their response will be shaped by their feelings, so the answer you get may be shaped by their feelings, so the answer you get may be weighted away from Reality by the very thing you want to find out about.

What people first think of when they approach this subject is Emotion. But Emotions are just a part of a human beings Affectiveness. It gets recognized because it is the most noticeable. A persons feelings go through four stages for each bit of Reality he or she faces, whether an idea, a spouse, a doorknob or Almighty God Himself. As each bit enters a person's scope of acknowledgment it's at once labelled with an Impression. Impressions are small feelings based on the rest of the person's Value System. Where eventually anger will emerge, mild disgust will show its head. What will become joy appears at first as excitement or elation.

A woman's impressions differ from a man's in that while she is more person oriented, he is more object oriented. When she enters a crowded room, to her the group of people is made up of individuals with individual needs and desires. When a man enters a room, he most likely will see the individuals as part of a group (an object) with a need and desire derived from the collective needs and desires of the individuals. That is a generalization, but is there to demonstrate how the Cognitive bent of the male and female mind shapes Impressions.

Emotions are the most visible of the stages of feelings. Actually Impressions and Emotions could be said to be the feeling stages and Attitudes and values, the judging stages. Impressions are of or about something, and come and go fleetingly. Emotions are the transitional stage where our feelings are going from impersonal Impressions to personal Values. Emotions can be seen as the troubled adolescence of a feeling.

Men are just as emotional as women: The difference is while men act upon Emotions, women think about their Emotions. Men take it for granted that when *this* happens, *this* feeling results and *this* action follows. Women treat their emotions like an object. Studies have shown that while men show their anger physically, women show their anger verbally.⁴

Attitudes develop when feelings settle into a person's personality and cause that person to react in a certain consistent way. Attitudes shape Impression. A woman who has a negative Attitude toward men or a southerner who has a negative Attitude toward a Brooklyn accent will obviously have their Impressions of a male visitor from New York shaped in those Attitudes. Attitudes are "matured" Emotions, not always desirable thought. A depressed person becomes a pessimistic person as the Emotion of depression settles into their mind.⁵

When tested for the need to achieve, men and women score the same. When tested for the need to be accepted by others, women scored higher than men.⁶

What this shows is that women place a higher Value on the opinions of others. Women tend to more readily see themselves as part of a team and Value their own accomplishments as a part of the whole. Men tend to see themselves as sole gladiators and value their own accomplishment in and of itself. The Attitudes that result are the Attitudes of "I am a valuable part" for a woman and "I am valuable" for a man.

When finally, after Impressions become Emotions, then Attitudes, they solidify in the mind of a human being as part of the Value System, or as Kohlberg calls it, their moral reasoning.⁷

Another term might be Philosophy of life or World View. This in turn shapes future Impressions, Emotions and Attitudes. Most deeply felt Emotions are caused by things that bring two deeply held Values in conflict. When your mother scolded you, your Value of her was brought up against your Value of yourself. If your Value of her was stronger, you felt guilt. If your Value of yourself was stronger, you felt anger, but until one or the other won, the Emotions rocked you and upset you.

A woman's Value System is oriented around belonging. When women began to vote, suddenly humanitarian laws began to appear. Women value people. A man's Value System is oriented around his sense of Duty. "A man's gotta do what a man's gotta do." Men start wars because wars are mainly about Duty and Responsibility, not people.

A woman's feelings lead her to value individuals over groups or things. A man's feelings lead him to Value principals and ideas over individuals. It's been said that if women had been in charge there would have

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been no wars. That may be true, but that same thing that has led men into wars has also led them into building great civilizations.

I am reminded of a sight that awed me at a state fair. A large Clydesdale was getting excited in his pen. This horse was huge. Its neck was three feet thick and head stood a good eight feet off the ground, when it wasn't rearing on its hind legs, and at the moment it was not happy. It was rearing and bucking in its pen and even though the pen was made of sturdy lumber the horse's saucer sized hooves were threatening to do irreparable damage to its surroundings. No one dared enter the pen. Soon its owner appeared. A tiny woman barely five feet tall stepped into the pen and began scolding the horse as if it were a child. She reached up as high as she could and slapped the horse on its chest. This towering mountain of muscle and bone and sinew, who had had all the men around the pen sweating in fear, became like a kitten. It settled down and childishly nuzzled its nose into the girl's hand. If there ever was a picture of the relationship between the powerful capability of men and the powerful restraint of women, this was it.

RELATIONAL CLUES

Studying how the human body functions, how the human mind thinks and how the human personality feels, deals only within the individuals. The next step is how human beings deal with one another. The way humans communicate with one another can be divided into two categories: verbal and non-verbal. Verbal communication includes what people say to each other. Non-verbal communication includes how people say things to each other and how their body looks while they're saying it. What you are reading is strictly verbal communication. If you could hear my voice and hear the intonations and emphases put upon the words, or see my face and body position to determine my attitudes about the words that would be non-verbal communication.

In tests women have shown a greater ability in using body language, while men and women both feel that the opposite sex is more expressive in depicting Emotions.⁸

One problem that constantly arises is the lack of understanding on the part of women of the power of visual stimuli on men.

Tests also show that men are more likely to touch others while women are not only more likely to be touched by others but respond more to being touched.⁹

This gives light to the problem of men not understanding the effect that touching has on a woman.

In groups, men tend to offer more instrumental comments (giving opinions or offering information) while women tend to offer more expressive comments (comments about feelings or that show support).¹⁰

A test conducted on a group of college students divided them into pairs after first giving them a written test to determine levels of dominance. After the tests were evaluated, the students were divided into three groups. The first group of pairs of same sexed partners, the second, partners of different sex with the man having a higher dominance and the third, mixed, with the women having the higher dominance. The partners were to choose which of the two would be the leader and which would be the follower. Of the same sexed pairs the one higher in dominance was chosen as leader 70% of the time. Of the second group, the man with the higher dominance was chosen leader 90% of the time. Of the third, the woman with the higher dominance was chosen only 20% of the time, and in the majority of these cases it was the high-dominant woman who made the decision – deciding that her male partner should be the leader.¹¹

It is apparent that the Physiological, Cognitive and Affective factors play a part in how a man or a woman relates to others. Men think in terms of ideas therefore they offer suggestions. Women think in terms of people therefore offer encouragement. Even in terms of deciding leadership both men and women tend to choose men. There is no culture where the women naturally dominate the men. Some sceptics will refer to Margaret Mead's study of the Tchambuli people in Paupau, New Guinea. She concluded that the sex roles for this tribe were opposite that of what had been considered natural, but her conclusion was based on a few stereotypes of western civilization, while ignoring such blatant contradictions as the Tchambuli's custom of men buying and selling wives as property.¹²

The Relational Clues seem to show us that while in groups, men tend to be pushed toward the leader role; women are pushed toward the helper role.

SCRIPTURAL CLUES

God made us. Genesis 1:27 says that He made us male and female. that particular verse doesn't tell us what male and female are, just that it was God that made us with that difference and that the difference is important enough to deserve mention when mankind is first mentioned. Later in chapter two, a little more is told about the difference. Adam was created first. But God remarks that it is not good that man is alone. It almost appears as if a little drama is being played out by God in order to get Adam to fully appreciate Eve. First God remarks that it is not good for Adams to be alone. Of course Adam would agree. Then Adam is required to go through all the animals, name them and see if there is one that would be a suitable companion for him. None is found. Then God causes Adam to sleep and makes woman from him. Two important things can be noticed here. God made Adam first, and God made Eve for Adam. At that time those were the two distinctive Clues that showed each their place in regard to each other. Adam was given not just a woman but the responsibility of her as well. Eve was not set free to do her own thing, but was brought to Adam. The Function of their relationship to each other was based on the purpose of Adam needing a companion and Eve being created to be that companion. Then came the Fall.

With the Fall a new set of circumstances came into the picture. Guidelines were established, rules were given. The woman now had pain in child bearing and her desire would be to her husband and he would rule over her. (Gen. 3:17) Adam had to deal with thorns and thistles and earn his bread by the sweat of his brow. (Gen, 3:18-19)

The rules followed in the Bible reflected not only the initial purpose but also the added curses. One example of this is the Mosaic laws concerning vows. A man's vow stood as it had been made, but a woman's vow required the approval of the man whose authority she was under, whether her father or her husband. (Num. 30:1-16)

There was a difference in the number of days of uncleanness a woman had after giving birth, in the mosaic law, according to whether she had given birth to a boy or a girl. If it was a boy she was unclean seven days and for thirty-three days she could not touch anything hallowed or enter the sanctuary. If it was a girl she was unclean fourteen days, then could not touch anything hallowed or enter the sanctuary for sixty-six days after that. It is clearly arguable that the purpose of this law is some hygienic condition that results from the sex of the child being born. (Leviticus 12:1-5) The sacrifice for a newborn child was the same for a male or female child, which seems to imply an equality of value in the eyes of God, regardless of their Expected Roles.

These Expected Roles are sometimes dismissed as mere cultural phenomena that have no practical application today. This argument falls apart in the light of the consistency of teaching from creation, through the Mosaic period, the period of the judges and so on even to the New Testament. The shortest credible suggestion of elapsed time between Genesis and the New Testament Church is four thousand years. We are now only a little less than two thousand years past the start of the New Testament Church and our modern views of feminism have existed only fifty years at the most, so between a thousand year old tradition and an attitude of a few decades it is easy to see which is the temporary cultural phenomenon. Another Clue found in scripture is the continual comparison of the relationship between God and His people and a man and his wife. Isaiah speaking to Israel says, "For thy Maker is thy husband..." (Isaiah 54:5a) and "...as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee." Jeremiah refers to Israel as the wife of the Lord (Jeremiah 3:1) and later quotes God as saying, "...I was a husband to them [Israel]". (Jeremiah 31:31) The second chapter of Hosea is entirely in figurative language of a husband to his wayward wife, when conveying the message of the Lord. In God's Revelation to John, the Church is called the Bride of the lamb. (Rev. 21:2,9) Paul uses the comparison in reverse when he admonishes husbands to give themselves for their wives as Christ gave himself for the Church (Eph. 5:23-27)

If you can picture a mother who gives a doll to her daughter so the little one can understand what being a "mommy" is, you might see how these Clues seem to point out that as God made man, He created us with a smaller picture of His relationship to us as His people.

Scripturally it appears as if God has used, in the spiritual domain, the difference between men and women as an illustration of His relationship with us.

CONCLUSION

What is Masculinity and what is Femininity? Physically the Clues tell us that women are mothers and men are fathers. Cognitively the Clues tell us that women are verbal and men are mathematical. Affectively the Clues tell us that women value people and men value duty. Relationally the Clues tell us that women find themselves in the role of Helper, while men find themselves in the role of leader. Scripture confirms the Physical and Relational Clues and adds an illustration of God's relationship with the Church. Those are the Functions that can be observed. What purpose do they point to? Any physical purpose such as "enjoyment of sex" or "procreation" will fall short of being considered an eternal, divine purpose in that they will eventually disappear. They both are valuable Functions but certainly not Original Purpose. The only result that appears to have eternal consequences is simply this: **God has given us a small picture of our relationship to Him in order to allow us to better understand that relationship.** How does that affect our behavior? Simply put, it means that men should behave toward women in the way that God behaves toward the Church. He gave himself for her, He watches over her, He provides for her, He rejoices in her, He reaches out to her. Women should behave toward men the way the Church should (not necessarily is, but should) be behaving toward God. She should be submitting to Him, she should seek His wisdom, she should be open to Him, etc.

What about woman as Mother, Counselor, Humanitarian and Helper or man as Father, Engineer, General and leader? Each of these descriptions of Functions fit into and help illustrate the picture of the relationship between God and His Church. God plants the seed, the Church bears the fruit. God made this world, the Church aids its occupants in living in it. God conquers our enemies for us and commands us to forgive. God is sovereign and allows the Church to help in His sovereign plan.

Norman Rockwell did a humorous self portrait of himself trying to draw a self portrait. The message contained in the picture needed not only himself in the picture but the picture of himself on the easel. The picture God has given us has two equally valuable and necessary parts. Neither can convey the picture alone but both need to be portraying the Proper part for the picture to work.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Gary Smalley, *‘The Joy of Committed love’* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), 15.
- 2 Sally P. Springer and Georg Deutsch, *‘Left Brain, Right Brain’*, (New York: W.H. Freeman and Co., 1985), 15.
- 3 Ibid., 175.
- 4 Smalley, 13.
- 5 Ibid., 14.
- 6 Kay Deaux, *‘The Behavior of Men and Women’* (Monterey, CA: Brooks-Cole Publishing Co., 1976), 48.
- 7 Robert F Biehler and Jack Snowman, *‘Psychology Applied to Teaching’* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin), 1986,
- 8 Deaux, 62.
- 9 Ibid., 65.
- 10 Ibid., 111.
- 11 Ibid., 117.
- 12 Margaret Mead, *‘Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies’* (New York: William Morris and Co., 1963),

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