

GROUNDING IN GOD'S DESIGN

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TEXT: GENESIS 4-5

The culture argues that a person's sex has to do with biological plumbing—our hardware—whereas gender has to do with psychological makeup—our software.

Gender dysphoria is the official term for a disconnect between a person's hardware and software, which causes deep pain and mental anguish. In the past decade, the number of teenagers referred for hormonal treatment and gender reassignment (or confirmation) surgery has increased over 4,000 percent. In the Western world, parents who instruct their children that gender corresponds to their biological plumbing at birth are now at risk of being accused of abuse or neglect.

How did we as a society reach a place of such gender confusion? Why is the ground under our feet shaking?

A fault line is a fracture in the earth's surface. When there's movement at a fault line, it causes an earthquake. **The Fall created a fault line in human sexuality.** When mankind fell, God pronounced judgment against Adam and Eve's sin sex-specifically. Sin messes with who I am as a woman, and what I do as a woman.

Cultural shifts in ideology, accompanied by technological advances, trigger a quake along the fault line of gender, sexuality, and morality. A huge ideological shift happened in Genesis 4:16 when "Cain went away from the presence of the Lord."

"The way of Cain" is a phrase to describe any person whose life is characterized by a rejection of God's authority, a scornful attitude toward holy things, and unbridled sexual expression. (See Jude 1:8-11.) The first century Jewish historian Josephus said, "Cain built a city to increase his wickedness."

Building a city required advances in architecture, construction, and engineering (Gen. 4:17). Cain's offspring were attributed with inventions in livestock farming, music and arts, and forging metals into tools and weapons (4:19-22).

These cultural advancements were accompanied by an escalation of sin and depravity, particularly in the area of human sexuality. Cain's descendent Lamech abandoned God's design for marriage by having two wives, and arrogantly boasted of knowing how to dish out revenge (v. 22). In her lifetime, Grandma Eve witnessed a change in morals—rape, abuse, violence, greed, sensuality, debauchery, immorality, and unbridled sexual expression.

From 1960 to 1990, feminism caused a huge shift in thinking about male-female roles and sexual behavior. As a culture, we moved from a *Leave It to Beaver* ideal of women's behavior to that of *Sex and the City*.

The main idea behind second-wave feminism in the 1960's was that women needed to redefine their role in society and reject traditional ideas about femininity, the role of wife and mother, and sexual standards.

Feminism has and does identify legitimate problems in male-female relationships. It flags issues like abuse that egregiously assault the worth and the dignity of women. Feminism contains truth, but it introduces a subtle deceptive twist into its solution. It is a philosophy that pivots from a Judeo-Christian view of the world.

Victor Hugo once said, "There is nothing more powerful than an idea whose time has come."

Society's acceptance of feminist ideas contributed to the sexual revolution in the '60s, and to an increase in promiscuity, immorality, and adultery. Women's commitment to self-actualization and career moved front and center. To this day, we are feeling aftershocks of this ideological quake.

Second-wave feminism could not have gained momentum without the technological advancements that supported them: invention of the birth control pill, the proliferation of Planned Parenthood clinics, television as mass communication, computer technology, and the multiplication of white-collar jobs.

The foreshocks of third-wave feminism began in the 1990's riot-girl, feminist-punk movement. The ideas were popularized in Jennifer Baumgartner's book, *Manifesta*, and in *Full Frontal Feminism* by Jessica Falenti. Third-wave feminists introduced the idea that sex and raunch—acting and dressing like a prostitute—was a political statement and a mark of girlpower. They pushed Kimberlé Crenshaw's gender and critical race theory. The third-wave now encourages women to deconstruct all rules about gender and sexuality. A woman can be lesbian, bisexual, asexual, trans-sexual; a man can become a woman—anything goes. "It's my body, my experience, my sexuality, my choice."

The current shakeup in gender and sexuality would not have been possible without advances in medicine, plastic surgeries, and hormone therapies, nor would it have been possible without the explosion of cell phones, iPads, Internet, and the influence of social media. There is nothing new under the sun. The shaking that we are experiencing is only new inasmuch as modern technology has provided sin more opportunity.

History has witnessed shake-ups like this before. The problem stretches all the way back to the massive fracture that occurred when Adam and Eve decided that it was a good idea to listen to the serpent.

How do we respond? How do we stand firm in God's good design for gender and become His ambassadors of mercy, grace, and hope to a broken and hurting world?

In the same way a strong foundation protects a physical building from being damaged by an earthquake, **you can protect yourself from being shaken by quake-proofing your mind with God's foundational truth about gender.**

Genesis 5:1-2 contains five rapid-fire truths concerning gender and sexuality:

1. God created you. You are not an evolutionary accident. He puts an incalculable value on your life, and He's involved in the process.
2. God created you to bear His image. Due to sin, it doesn't mean you bear His image well. Though God's image in humanity has been effaced, it has not been erased. Every human being deserves to be treated with dignity.
3. God assigns you to one side of a binary: male or female. God's binary applies to sex (hardware) and gender (software). Society says that sex and gender can be dissected from one another, but God

designed our bodies, souls, spirits, identities, sexuality, and sexual behaviors to function as part of a unified whole.

4. God created manhood and womanhood for our good and for His glory. It can be tough, admittedly, to view womanhood as a blessing, especially when we consider the abuse, rape, trafficking, mutilation, and the degradation experienced by our sisters all around the world. But the horrors of sin and evil do not change the fact that God's creation of male and female was good, very good. As humans, we flourish when we step into who God created us to be. In doing so, we bear witness to the great cosmic love story of Christ and His Bride and the eternal union to which gender and sexuality point.
5. He named them man when they were created, which in Hebrew is Adam, meaning mankind. God gave humanity as a whole the name Adam to indicate that we all inherit the sin nature of God's firstborn human, Adam, and to foreshadow the redemption that would come through Jesus Christ, the firstborn over all creation, the last Adam. God has the right to define what humanity—maleness, femaleness, sex, and gender—is all about (Eph. 3:15, Isa. 29:16). We do not.

After the earth-shaking trauma of Cain murdering Abel, Eve bore another son, Seth. When Seth's son was born, "people began to call upon the name of the Lord" (Gen. 4:26). The increasing wickedness made them desperate for God; it made Eve desperate for God.

Chapter five begins with the words, "This is the book of the generations of Adam," and then traces Adam's family line from Seth to Noah. In Hebrew, this record is called a toledot. Only the toledot in Genesis 5 and Matthew 1 add a phrase that is absent from all the others. It starts with, "This is the book of." Matthew 1:1 says, "This is the book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." Luke traces Jesus' human ancestry further back to Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

In the Bible, there's the book of Adam and the book of Jesus, the last Adam. Jesus Christ is the exclamation point at the end of Adam's wild and crazy story. Cain was Adam's firstborn son, but he isn't listed in Adam's toledot.

Every person in the human family has been born in a fallen condition, in the likeness of Adam, but Jesus rescues us from Cain's fate. He redeems the massive faultline that sin created in human sexuality. The incredible hope this passage points to is Jesus.

Our goal is not to make people heterosexual, our goal is to introduce them to Jesus, the Lover and the Redeemer of their souls!

So how do we respond to the cultural shaking that's going on in gender and sexuality? **We quake-proof our minds in truth, and we become spiritual earthquake ladies by loving people, passing on truth, and calling on the name of the Lord.**

There is a battle for our minds. Human philosophy wants to pull us away from the truth of the Word of God. **Earthquake ladies—and this is the most important point—always point people to Jesus, because Jesus is the only one who has the power to recreate and to redeem.**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Discuss the escalation of wickedness that Eve witnessed during her lifetime. How do you think she reacted to Cain's murder of Abel, and the change of morals ("the way of Cain") that developed?

Mary explained that "feminism contains truth, but it introduces a subtle deceptive twist into its solution." Describe the positive and negative influences of the second and third-wave feminist movement and the technological advances that accelerated the shake up.

Victor Hugo said, "There is nothing more powerful than an idea whose time has come." Explain how this statement applies to the timing and persuasion of the feminist movement.

What do you want to remember from the five foundational truths about gender and sexuality found in Gen. 5:1-2? Discuss them as a group in order to quake-proof your mind with truth and to be able to share them with someone else.

Share how the fault lines of the sexuality and gender revolution are triggering earthquakes in your family, friends, or church. If you're willing to share, what is your personal point of vulnerability that Jesus wants to touch?

How should we talk to our daughters, nieces, or granddaughters about the lies of sexuality and gender they hear and see in our culture?

Spiritual earthquake ladies always point people to Jesus, who is the only One who has the power to recreate and to redeem. Describe the ways of an earthquake lady, and how she balances truth with compassion.

Our goal is not to make people heterosexual; our goal is to introduce them to Jesus, the Lover and the Redeemer of their souls. Who will you begin praying for that needs Jesus?

