

In these days of confusion over the nature of gender and the relationship between men and women, Luke Griffo offers a refreshingly biblical take on the beauty of God's design. Male and female were both made in God's image, but He uniquely designed them to beautifully complement each other as they image God. This is not something from which to run away with embarrassment—recognition of the beauty of the binary will actually allow both men and women to flourish as God designed. But ultimately, the solution to gender confusion is found in the gospel, as God's redeemed people identify with Christ and live as Christ. I'm thankful for this helpful, pastoral treatment of a challenging subject in today's confused climate.

**Scott Aniol, PhD**

**Executive Vice President and Editor-in-Chief, G3 Ministries  
Professor of Pastoral Theology, Grace Bible Theological Seminary**

In an age of confusion, the church should be a beacon of clarity. The world's attempt to subvert the gender binary is perhaps the most destructive example of the moral chaos of our day, and Christians must be equipped to clearly oppose it. *The Beauty of the Binary* provides Christians with a thorough biblical defense of the necessity of male and female distinctions. Readers will finish confident in their ability to give an answer for God's good design for gender.

**Allie Beth Stuckey**

**Host, *Relatable* Podcast - Blaze Media**

**Author, *You're Not Enough***

Without a doubt, the American evangelical church lacks a consistent understanding of masculinity and femininity, and *The Beauty of the Binary: Male and Female He Created Them* will be an excellent tool for believers who wish to think rightly about these realities. Written in an approachable and conversational tone, even while communicating weighty truths, this book is an excellent and faithful overview of the biblical stance on anthropology—man and woman as image-bearers, fallen sinners, and objects of God's undeserved grace. The reader will thoroughly enjoy the jewels of wisdom that

Griffo has procured from the Word of God and laid before the saints. *The Beauty of the Binary* will not merely call the lost into the light; this work will surely provoke awe from the people of God as they consider the wisdom of their Creator and Redeemer.

I have also had the privilege of knowing Luke Griffo as he lives out his maleness in obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. I have spent hours on sidewalks outside abortion clinics in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, as Luke exhorts parents with boldness and evident love to choose life for their preborn babies. I have watched Luke care for his wife, Meg, as she battles various medical challenges, and more recently, I have watched Luke and Meg enter the role as parents of two adopted twin boys. Luke is a man who not only knows how to accurately communicate biblical truth about men and women—he lives it every day, to the glory of God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

I could not commend *The Beauty of the Binary*, and Luke Griffo himself, more highly.

**Ben Zeisloft**  
**Education Director, Abolish Abortion Pennsylvania**

In a straightforward and uncompromising treatment of one of the most pressing issues facing the church and society today, Luke helps bring clarity to all the confusion brought on by the transgender movement. He presents a thoroughly biblical picture of the binary, which, for far too many evangelicals, has become muddled as we have watched the usurpation, redefinition, and disgrace of the *imago dei* by a godless culture.

In *The Beauty of the Binary*, Luke calls us to fully embrace God's design, intention, and purpose for His image-bearers. This book will help you understand the sheer weightiness of this issue, equip you to deal rightly with it, and encourage you to engage with loving boldness.

**Joe Griffo**  
**Pastor, Redeemer Church of South Hills**

In some ways, it is a shame and a disgrace to our generation that author Luke Griffo's book, *The Beauty of the Binary*, is necessary. On the one hand, it justly indicts the culture of death and reveals how the mighty have fallen under our watch. On the other hand, this jewel of a book reveals redemptive history. In the darkest of times, which create furnaces of affliction, these are typically the eras when God's greatest salvific works are made manifest in the earth.

Utilizing the beauty, love, wisdom, and relationship of the triune God of the Bible, the Lord's creation order, holy commandments, and great salvation, Mr. Griffo establishes the standard by which men and nations are to conduct their affairs in our poor, fallen world. In the case of the transgender movement, it exposes the deception, delusion, and distortion of the sexes while upholding God's original intent for the male and female of the species. It is not what males and females can do according to their sinful brokenness, which rapes minds and mutilates bodies, but what they are supposed to do according to God's immutable, inerrant, and inspired design.

Whereas Matt Walsh's *What Is a Woman?* does highlight with humor and creativity the absurdity, dysfunction, and dysphoria of the transgendered movement, he misses the ultimate mark. Luke Griffo does not. He hits the mark by building his case against the transgender movement based on the solid-rock foundation of God's Word.

I encourage every Christian to get this book to be equipped to give an answer for the hope that lies within us (1 Peter 3:15). The church must be prepared to dismantle Satan's lies and minister the gospel of the kingdom to those who have been captured by him to desecrate and destroy the very image of God.

**Rusty Thomas**  
**Former Director, Operation Save America**  
*Author, Strategies to End Abortion*



**THE  
BEAUTY  
OF THE  
BINARY**



**THE  
BEAUTY  
OF THE  
BINARY**

**MALE AND FEMALE HE CREATED THEM**

**LUKE GRIFFO**

**FOREWORD BY MARK COPPENGER**

The Beauty of the Binary  
Male and Female He Created Them

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*For,*  
*Arianna, Katie, Penny, Ellie*  
*Evie, Lydia, Sophie,*  
*Ruby, Felicity, Adeline, Ivy*



# Foreword

**E**stablished by Congress in 2017, the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service was charged with exploring ways to increase participation in federal programs, and by the spring of 2019, they were holding hearings on whether the U.S. should extend selective service registration (preparatory to the draft) to women. Representing the Southern Baptist Convention, whose resolutions had opposed this, I joined with a Catholic, a Quaker, a libertarian atheist, and a female Marine veteran of the Iraq War to speak against the proposal. The commission was stacked in favor of it, so in 2020, they commended it to Congress through their “Inspired to Serve” report, but it ultimately failed in 2021, thanks to the adamant opposition of eleven conservative senators.

Of course, the political and media air was filled with talk of the competencies of women-at-arms. Two big-budget films, *G. I. Jane* with Demi Moore (1997) and *Courage Under Fire* with Meg Ryan (1996), had tutored us in the noble cause of giving women warriors their due, and in 2015, combat roles were opened to them. Yes, physical fitness tests had to be adjusted, and studies had shown that women lagged behind men in both “lethality and survivability” on the battlefield. Furthermore, new facilities and gear had to be designed and provided, and a range of gender challenges had to be negotiated, including sexual tensions in the ranks, unplanned

pregnancies, and awkward vestiges of chivalry in task assignments. But never mind that: modern men and women were supposed to “grow up” and work through these outmoded concerns and throw the doors wide open to equal opportunity and such.

The focus lay on the question, “Are women up to the task?” and an affirmative drumbeat was heard all around. On the table was the matter of whether we should conscript them *into* military service, but I asked whether women should be conscripted *away from* the role of wife and mother, which is what a draft would do. For this point, I asked my DC-area daughter to bring her four daughters to the hearing. In her twenties, she had walked away from a full-ride doctoral program at Georgetown University and from prestigious federal job offers, including one at the White House, to be a homeschooling homemaker. I argued that it would be absurd to institute a policy that could have derailed this life choice.

I also recalled the draft lottery installed during the Vietnam War, imagining how we guys would have heaped contempt on a dude who complained that the draft board would never have reached his magic birthday number (e.g., March 1, 1949: #108) had they included women in the system, for that would have cut the men’s liability in half. Indeed (with apologies to Shakespeare), had that happened, such fellows then “abed” in America in 1970 should have “held their manhoods cheap” as they watched their girlfriends negotiate the horrors of the Mekong Delta.

That same spring of 2019, my wife and I attended the retirement ceremony for our Marine officer son at Camp Lejeune. He’d served two tours in Iraq, and in his remarks on the occasion, he praised his mother for the contribution she’d made to the formation of his character. You see, Sharon didn’t serve *in* the Marines, but she’d served the Marines just the same, and in a way that was natural and honorable. They even gave her a certificate of appreciation for her “unselfish, faithful, and devoted service . . . [her] unflinching support and understanding . . . [and her] personal sacrifice and dedication” throughout his tour of duty. Oorah, Mom!

In the book you are about to read, Luke Griffo’s case is grounded in Scripture, from the Torah on through the Epistles,

with generous attention to poetic, prophetic, and gospel passages. For instance, he builds on the relational nature of the Trinity and the “toxic masculinity” of David against Goliath. I’m so thankful for his work in explicating, honoring, and defending the differentiation of roles—creator and sustainer—divinely ordered from the beginning. Until I read this book, I’d missed the corresponding elements of the Genesis 3 curse—the first concerning childbirth, the second concerning agricultural toil. And he does us a favor by extending our pro-life enthusiasm for the unborn child in Psalm 139 to include God’s esteem for the womb as the vehicle for bringing the Lord to earth. Contrast that, for instance, with the mythical “births” of a fully formed Venus from the sea (portrayed in a famous painting by Botticelli) and an adult Athena from the forehead of Zeus.

Griffo doesn’t shrink from the procreation mandate of Genesis 1:28, a command that, surprisingly, even evangelicals find optional or quaintly outdated. I recall a conversation our *Kairos Journal* team had over our treatment of that passage. One of the editorial crew suggested that maybe our “filling the earth” was a wrap, what with well over seven billion people crowding the planet. But considering the entire population of the world could fit into the city limits of Houston, maybe our human “footprint” isn’t as big as he thought. About this time, I was teaching two sections of Christ and culture to freshmen at Wheaton, and I asked them whether, in light of Genesis 1:28, they had a responsibility to try to have at least some kids if they married. Out of the thirty or so in each class, only a handful raised their hands. Maybe career thinking or financial concerns came into play, maybe they thought it was none of my business, or perhaps they’d never thought of it as a directive that applied to them. At any rate, they treated Genesis 1:28 as an elective. Not so, Luke Griffo.

Griffo is bold but also circumspect and nuanced as he deals with Scripture. He states clearly the purpose of the book—“not to emphasize the similarities between men and women but rather their differences”—but he takes into account our debt to such strong “weaker vessels” as Rahab, Esther, and Deborah, whose

beyond-homemaking deeds were strikingly helpful. And he takes pains to deal with difficult passages, such as the Deuteronomy 17 dictum that an unbetrothed rape victim and her rapist should marry after a fine was paid to her father. And while granting, with reference to Proverbs 31:30, that charm and beauty can be (and perhaps often are) deceitful, they are not necessarily so, for God “cherishes aesthetic beauty and majesty.” And while Griffo is on the topic of appearances, he gives special attention to the way the face is prominent in the Bible (another of his discussions to which I said, “Hey, I hadn’t thought about that”).

Both of my sons attended seminary, and the presidents were kind enough to invite me to deliver a prayer for the graduates. On both occasions, I included this sentence: “I ask that, in this terribly confused and willful world, the men gathered here today would be manly and the women womanly.” I wish I could say that some attendees thanked me for sounding that note, but none did. Indeed, I think it struck their ears as a bit embarrassing or unfortunate. What was I trying to say? What outdated stereotypes was I advancing? If, however, they had asked, I would have enjoyed handing them this book with the suggestion that they give it a read.

Griffo dedicates the book to “Arianna, Katie, Penny, Ellie, Evie, Lydia, Sophie, Ruby, Felicity, Adeline, Ivy,” and he has served the graciously godly best interests of those ladies well, whatever the culture may presume.

*Dr. Mark Coppenger*



Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

– *Philippians 4:8*



# Introduction

**T**imes of crisis are tools used to sharpen. It is a simple fact that human beings take certain things for granted—we have our assumptions, our presuppositions—and by nature, we do not give much critical thought to these. Most of us have never thought about why we hold the conviction that the earth is round—that is what we're taught in school, and we've seen the photos. However, when we are met with a person positing carefully thought out arguments for a flat earth, we suddenly must examine the belief we had taken for granted and make a concrete argument for it. Crisis is the crucible in which convictions are calcified. When challenges arise, when objections begin to encircle us, it is then that we carefully consider and seek to logically defend those things once thought to be obvious.

Throughout church history, some of the greatest theological works with which the Lord has blessed His people have risen out of crises of conflict. The Nicene Creed, a well-crafted and carefully formulated articulation of the Trinity, was occasioned by the heresy of Arianism; Augustine's work on soteriology was largely designed as a refutation of Pelagianism; and the Protestant Reformation produced a litany of literature defending justification by faith alone. Even in our current day, the sustained challenge of natural materialism and Big Bang cosmology has prompted a host of deep dives into the historicity of Genesis and the scientific case for young-earth creationism.

It has become clear that we are now at a point where gender—one of the very few things that have been taken for granted throughout virtually all of human history—must be staunchly defended.

There is sparse literature to be found regarding the biblical foundation for gender, and why shouldn't there be? This is a topic that, to any passive observer, ought to be painfully obvious, a matter of biological fact. But the current generation is experiencing a gender revolution, and at breakneck speed. A mere seven years in the rearview mirror, the legalization of so-called same-sex marriage in the United States might as well be ancient history, with transgenderism now being heralded as the human rights issue of our day. Schools cannot cram gender ideology into their curricula quickly enough. It is becoming increasingly common to see an “other” option under gender on medical forms. Preferred pronouns are displayed proudly on name tags and social media profiles. “Gender minorities” are continuing to succeed in their demands to be appointed to positions of power and influence. All the while, the spectrum of gender identities continues its steady ascent toward infinity.

The orthodoxy of the day is that gender is unfixed and fluid, not something that can be assumed or plainly observed. We live in a time where the inescapable implications of relativistic philosophy have borne their poisonous fruit; if there is no fixed truth, if every person is free to determine his or her own reality, then why should gender be any different?

The very foundations of reality appear to be crumbling around us. As Christians, we may be tempted to simply ignore this phenomenon as best we can, to look the other way, and to convince ourselves that something so clearly contradictory to reality cannot possibly last. It is true that such an ideology does not come with a long shelf life, but the collateral damage that will be caused by the transgender revolution—not to mention the overt assault on truth itself—is too high a cost for Christians to turn a blind eye. People made in God's image are mutilating their bodies in permanent ways, lives and families are being destroyed, and more and more, children are the ones falling prey to these evils. Transgender

ideology is everywhere, and—as is always the responsibility of Christians—we must be prepared to articulate a reasoned defense of the truth and refute monstrous, destructive lies.

There are a host of biological, philosophical, and psychological reasons to oppose transgenderism, and these are important, but they are outside the scope of this book. The purpose of this little book is not to point out that there *is* a gender binary but to explore *why* there is a gender binary and why it is good. It is my hope that this will be a useful tool for parents to teach their children why it is good and beautiful to be as God made them, whether male or female, and for pastors to equip congregations at a foundational level to answer the suffocating objections of society. We must be able to stretch beyond the simplistic-yet-true response, “Because that’s how God made it,” and answer the deeper question of why we rejoice in the gender binary and contend for it from a distinctly biblical worldview. This necessarily means that we will generalize to a degree and at times paint with a broad brush, yet I hope that the pages to follow will make clear that a tremendous amount of beautiful diversity exists within the male and female sexes. But the two categories are themselves fixed and unchangeable, and to properly recognize the uniquely created beauty in both, we must analyze and highlight not the similarities between men and women but the differences. We must also make clear that while our sex is important to our identity, it certainly is not the essence of it. Modern gender ideology simultaneously teaches that gender is definitive and that gender can shift from one hour to the next; it is the essence of who a person is, and yet it is always subject to change.

Of course, there is resistance to the Christian perspective. “Why is it any of your business?” “If someone feels more comfortable this way or that, isn’t it the loving thing to accept and affirm them?” “What gives you the right to force your beliefs on everyone else?” “If you really believed in liberty, you would realize that everybody has the fundamental right to live as whatever gender they prefer and modify their body to their soul’s content.” We need good, meaningful, biblical answers to these objections, and God’s

Word provides them. God did not simply make the world—He made it good. Gender is good. Maleness and femaleness are good. My prayer is that this book will open up these truths and equip us to teach them to others that we may glory and rejoice in the beauty of the binary.

## Unity and Plurality

**M**an-centeredness is the age-old plague upon both our culture and our theology. The present world is inundated with self-help, self-love, best-for-me, right-for-me, true-for-me, feels-good-for-me.

Sadly, the church has not been immune to the rise of the self. For instance, low commitment to membership in a local church body is normative within Christian culture, especially with the rise of “online church” being seen as a viable alternative. Then there is the celebrity preacher—the one man (or woman) whose personality *is* the church. We also observe a popular theology presenting Jesus as a poor beggar whom we must decide to invite into our hearts so that He can save us and we can go to heaven, without regard for our relationship to the body of believers as a whole.

It is also too often seen in the way we *do* theology, even on an individual level. We start with ourselves. When we read the Bible, our first question usually is, “What does this mean for me? How is this relevant for me?” From creation to salvation, the modern church tends to see Scripture as the story of man—our fall, our salvation, our glory. But a proper view of Scripture and theology must begin with God. It must be God-centered. What we should be asking first is “What does this tell me about God?” The story

of Scripture is the story of God glorifying Himself by creating all things and sending His Son to redeem a people He had elected from all eternity—all for His own good pleasure. God is the main character, the hero. It's all about Him.

So when we approach the topic of gender, which is essential to the nature of man, we must begin with the nature of God Himself. It may appear that nothing could be more exclusively human than gender, so why bother discussing something as theological and philosophical as the ontological nature of God? But if we are to affirm that man is made in God's image—and that this fact bears a weighty importance in the gender discussion—we must first understand the nature of the God in whose image we are. The nature of God is essential to understanding the whole of human nature, and that includes the specific area of gender. To adequately articulate the beauty and importance of the male and female genders, we must begin by coming to an understanding of the beauty and importance of the triune nature of our God.

Obviously, it is beyond the scope of this book to dive into a detailed discourse on the Trinity, a doctrine that has produced countless volumes and innumerable hours of study spanning many centuries. However, several aspects of this doctrine are especially pertinent to the study of human nature and gender in particular.

Oftentimes when discussing the Trinity, we almost exclusively spend our time in the various "proof texts"—those beautiful and well-known passages that so clearly affirm the deity of Christ, the personality of the Holy Spirit, and the equality that exists between the three Persons. There are such passages as Acts 20:28: "Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood." There is also the account of Jesus's baptism: "And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased'" (Matt. 3:16–17). These and many other passages plainly differentiate



between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Indeed, these passages are essential to know, understand, and teach the biblical truth we call the Trinity.

On the flip side, there is a danger in becoming bogged down in the apologetics to the point where the Trinity is seen as nothing more than a cold philosophical doctrine to be defended rather than the revelation of the very being and nature of the eternal Creator God who has entered into relationship with us. To understand the Trinity in this way—as an intimate peek at the eternal nature of the God who made us after His own image—cannot but shape the manner in which we think about God and, subsequently, all other things. God is the only proper starting point for thinking about the world.

It is true God has entered into relationship with all His creatures. Not only is this clear in the fact that God made man in His own image but He also states it explicitly to Noah following the great flood: “Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, and with every living creature that is with you” (Gen. 9:9–10). God, as Creator, has a general covenantal relationship with mankind in which He promises to uphold and sustain life in this theater of creation. God is relational.

Yet before this—and indeed before even creation itself—God is in relationship within Himself. God, as revealed in Scripture, is unchanging; therefore, He did not *become* relational at the moment of creation but He has *always been* relational, even from all eternity. This is because there have always existed three distinct Persons within the Godhead. This great mystery, revealed in the pages of Scripture, depicts a God who is at the same time both a perfect unity and a perfect plurality, eternally one and eternally three, totally unified and totally distinct. This is the eternal nature of God.

Biblical Christianity must take God as the starting point for thought in every realm, including that of beauty. God is not only the source of beauty but also the measure of beauty and the very essence of beauty. Therefore, if we wish to get beyond the mere

fact of biological distinction and actually probe into its inherent beauty, we must firmly ground ourselves in the objectively beautiful nature of God. Down through the ages, great thinkers and philosophers have wrestled with the question of beauty, and one of the central conundrums is whether the ideal is ultimately found in unity or plurality. We see this being considered as far back as the ancient Greek philosophers. One commentator writes of Plato's thought, "Imitations of the Good will require a reduction or even an elimination of diversity, a merging of all aspects of life into one."<sup>1</sup> Conversely, Aristotle—a student of Plato—posits, "The error of Socrates must be attributed to the false notion of unity from which he starts. . . . The state, as I was saying, is a plurality, which should be united."<sup>2</sup> Even in more recent history, we observe this theme. At the founding of the United States, the Latin slogan *E Pluribus Unum* (one from many) was adopted, indicating that this question of unity and plurality was prominent in the minds of our founding fathers. The notion that "unity is strength" was taken up in the extreme during the rise of hyper-nationalism and fascism in the twentieth century, while the slogan "Diversity is our strength" has become a mantra of today's Left.

Clearly, these qualities remain relevant even in our own day. Ought we strive for sameness or distinction? Is everything ultimately one or many? The biblical doctrine of the Trinity is able to answer this question: both. This is because our God, who is the God of all creation, ultimately exists as both one and three. He is unity and plurality—one Being, three Persons. We therefore affirm the pre-eminence of both these concepts, sameness and diversity. What is more, we can actually celebrate and rejoice in both, purely because of the identity of our God.

Unity is beautiful. There is something objectively appealing about a marching band all dressed in perfectly matching uniforms, marching in step, synchronized in every respect. Or picture the beauty of a deep-blue ocean, where nothing but glistening water

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1 Cynthia Hampton, "The Good as Unity: Its Role in the Good Life in Plato's Later Thought" (1989), *The Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy Newsletter*, 257.

2 Aristotle, *Politics*.

can be seen for miles. Our God is one. This was the great confession of God's people, Israel: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one" (Deut. 6:4). Unlike the other nations of the ancient world, Israel worshiped *one* God, whose authority was brought to bear over all nations and peoples. When God delivered His people out of the land of Egypt, He demonstrated through the ten plagues that while Egypt had a god for the river, the harvest, the livestock, and the sun, Israel worshiped the *true* God, and in Him was *true* command of the river, harvest, livestock, and sun. The prophet Elijah, when confronted with widespread idolatry in his day, proved Yahweh to be the one true God by humiliating the prophets of Baal with the silence of their idol (1 Kings 18:21–39). There is also a lengthy section of poetic prophecy in Isaiah (chapters 40–49) dedicated to recognizing and celebrating that God is the one and only true and living God, including declarations such as "I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god. Who is like me? Let him proclaim it" (Isa. 44:6–7). And in this God is the essence of beauty. From Him came all things, and through Him all things are sustained; He is the God of eternity past and of the unending future; He is God over every nation, ruler of all kings; He is God over the sun, sea, stars, and sand. And the fact that all this goodness, all this wisdom, all this power and glory and holiness and righteousness is wrapped up in one unified, eternal Being is truly beautiful.

Yet plurality also is beautiful. To return to the marching band example, the uniformity of the whole truly is beautiful, yet when the great and harmonious diversity of instruments begins to play, it reveals depths and dimensions of beauty not at first evident within unity. An endless field of uniform roses is beautiful, but when one examines the unique patterns and proclivities of each individual flower, the beauty is multiplied exponentially. This principle is also true of the Almighty God. God, in His absolute, perfect unity, is the fullness of beauty. He is "a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the

iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children to the third and fourth generation" (Ex. 34:6–7). Yet it is in the revelation of His triunity, the unveiling of the three perfectly distinct Persons within the one Being of God, where His glorious beauty is seen with greater clarity and wonder than the oneness can adequately portray. And while we must be able to affirm and celebrate the reality that each Person—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—is eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, and so on, the beauty of the Trinity is evident not in the similarity of the three Persons but in their distinctions.

Now, we must caution that when discussing the Trinity, it is dangerously easy to fall into misunderstanding, misrepresentation, or even heresy, especially when considering the unique works of the members in what is known as the economic Trinity. Therefore, let us clearly affirm that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all to be honored and glorified in the works of creation, providence, and redemption. But as Scripture relegates certain elements of the works of God to specific Persons, so also must we, all the while taking nothing from the glory of any one of them.

We see chiefly in the Father the beauty of the eternal decree. Throughout Jesus's earthly ministry, He speaks of His duty as doing only what is the will of the Father. It is the Father who actively sent the Son (John 17:3), the Father who gave the Son His mission (John 17:4), the Father who was well pleased with the Son's work (Matt. 3:17; 17:5), the Father whose power raised the Son from the dead (1 Cor. 15:15), and the Father to whom the Son intercedes for His people (1 John 2:1). So, while all three Persons are in full, perfect accord, the Father is credited as the primary "planner," the authority to whom the other two willingly submit. In the Father is highlighted the beauty of God's wisdom, wisdom that caused the apostle to cry out,

Oh, the depths of the riches of and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable are his ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor? Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid? For

from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen. (Rom. 11:33–36)

It is for this reason that God the Father is said to be the highest recipient of glory in the final analysis. “Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:9–11). It is the Father who grants authority to the Son: “Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession” (Ps. 2:8); “And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me’ (Matt. 28:18). The glory and beauty of God’s work in the world are seen in the unity of purpose yet diversity of function within the Godhead. It is through the Son that every enemy of God is defeated, yet in the end, the Son will return dominion and authority to the Father as the ultimate object of praise:

Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For “God has put all things in subjection under his feet.” But when it says, “all things are put in subjection,” it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. When all things are subjected to him, the the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all. (1 Cor. 15:24–28)

None of this means that the Father is “more God” than the Son or the Spirit; rather, it teaches us that the full beauty of headship and willing submission (which we will later speak to at length) is seen perfectly in the eternal Being who is Himself beauty.

The Son, for His part, has His own peculiar beauty that helps us to see the full spectrum of loveliness existing within God. As we mentioned, through Him, we see the beauty of joyful submission to proper authority and a greater beauty of intimacy. Although the triune God is totally holy and separate from all Creation, the

Person of the Son took on human flesh, became like a creature, and intimately identified with His people. “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with us, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15). The Son, in His incarnation, demonstrates the beauty of sympathy, affection, closeness, and kindness. He entered into humanity to suffer as a man and thus deliver man from the final suffering he deserves. We see the beauty of mercy and compassion expressed personally in His earthly ministry: “When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (Matt. 9:36); “Jesus wept. So the Jews said, ‘See how he loved him!’” (John 11:35–36). Though God is spoken of and proves Himself to be a God of mercy and compassion, and though He is said to grieve for His people, it is the Son who quite literally puts flesh on these beautiful attributes of God, and who does so in a unique way within the Godhead.

The third member of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, whose ministry is often less heralded than either the Father’s or the Son’s, nevertheless shows forth His own unique angle of the beauty of God. In His work, the Spirit actually highlights the beauty of God’s transforming power. It is the Spirit who gives man a new heart and who writes God’s law on our hearts and causes us to desire to know Him (Ezek. 36:26–27; Jer. 31:33–34; John 16:7–14). In this way, the ministry of the Holy Spirit is both public and very tangible because it is seen in the actual living and breathing Christians in the world today. So all the good we do as Christians, all the love we express, all that we build to the glory of God, is a manifestation of the beauty of God the Holy Spirit, for it is He who animates us with our various gifts: “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good” (1 Cor. 12:4–7). His work in us is also seen in the particular beauty of God’s holiness; hence, He is the *Holy* Spirit. God is holy, and His holiness was expressed in various outward ways throughout the old covenant, not the least

of which was the temple. Yet now it is we, the people of God, who are the manifestation of His holiness—the new covenant temple (1 Peter 2:5; 1 Cor. 6:19)—by virtue of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us.

A clear and succinct formulation of the division of beauty (so to speak) within the Godhead can be found in the benediction at the conclusion of 2 Corinthians: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all” (13:14). Here we see the beauty of God’s work and His being through the uniqueness of the three Persons.

In God the Son, we see the emphasis on God’s graciousness, His forgiveness of our sin by virtue of taking it upon Himself. God’s mercy is specifically displayed in the work of Christ—His willingness to suffer wrath on our behalf and to represent and mediate for us in the heavenly temple.

In God the Father, the love of the triune Being is supreme. It is the Father who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to supply everlasting life (John 3:16), the Father who predestined us in love to be His adopted children (Eph. 1:4–5).

And finally, it is the Holy Spirit, filling every one of Christ’s people, who shows forth the beauty of fellowship, of communion. He dwells within individuals from every age, nation, and language and unites them with one another as a single, indivisible body of Christ yet with a blessed plurality of gifts and variety of members.

So, again, we affirm and celebrate that, although our God is perfectly and indivisibly one, He also is three. The Trinity magnifies His awe-inspiring beauty and perfection to a level that otherwise would be wholly inaccessible to man.

At this point, it is fair to wonder what any of this has to do with the discussion of gender. What ought to be understood is that to have a truly biblical answer to the gender revolution, we must see all reality as being firmly rooted in the nature of God, especially when it comes to these discussions of beauty, goodness, and truth. God created man in His own image to reflect His glory: “What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care

for him? Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet” (Ps. 8:4–6).

We all share this in common, and it is beautiful. And just as we rejoice in the unity of God’s perfect oneness, we also rejoice in the commonality of all mankind. It is astonishing and praiseworthy that two human beings from opposite corners of the globe, who speak completely different languages and know nothing of the other’s culture, share in the common experience of humanity because they are made in the image of the same Creator. The unity of all mankind truly is beautiful.

Yet, as within the Supreme Being Himself, the full radiance of beauty in the human race is most clearly seen in the distinctions. While language, cultures, and customs all developed as divergences after the fall, and while individual personalities change, the precious and essential distinction established by God at creation is male and female. This is fixed. It is unchanging. It is foundational. When God on the sixth day of creation said, “Let us make man in our image” (Gen. 1:26), He left the fingerprints of the Trinity when “male and female he created them” (1:27). As in the Trinity, the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God; yet the Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Spirit, and the Spirit is not the Father. So, in the human creature, male is human and female is human, yet male is not female and female is not male. One human nature, two distinct genders. This is a reflection of God’s glorious nature, and it is indeed very good.

It is for this reason that the differences rather than the similarities between men and women must be highlighted. As we consider various attributes and qualities throughout this book, we acknowledge that men and women alike are strong, indispensable, and ought to be Christlike in every respect. Yet God has chosen to demonstrate the uniqueness of each by their very distinct manifestations of these qualities. Transgender ideology runs headlong into contradictory extremes. On the one hand, it emphasizes the similarities between the sexes to the point where there can be no



distinctions at all. On the other, it hyperbolizes the differences between men and women, almost to the point of parody in the play-acting of those who identify as the opposite sex. As Christians, we assert a healthy harmony of similarity and distinction because that is exactly what exists within our God. His nature is the foundation of all reality; thus, it is the necessary starting point and reference point for all our consideration if we are to faithfully contend for the gender binary.