

**Observations on Gender in Genesis 1–3**  
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1. Gen 1:27—Males and Females are *both* in the *image of God*, so an ontological equality exists between the genders.
2. Gen 2:7—God *formed* (צַרַּף) the male from the dust.
3. Gen 2:21–22—God *built* (בָּנָה) the female from a rib he took out of the male.
4. Gen 2:15—The stated purpose for which the male was placed in the garden was to work it and to keep it.
5. Gen 2:18—The narrator indicates that the purposes for which the female was created were (1) to remedy the loneliness of the male and (2) to be a helper to him.
6. From observations 4 and 5, I infer that these texts point to a *functional subordination* of the female to the male *before the fall*. In other words, the female’s role was to *complement* the male, and this role did not derive from either the curse or a distortion of relationship introduced by the fall.
7. Gen 2:19—Just as God exercised dominion over his creation in Genesis 1 by naming it (e.g., 1:5, “God called the light day”), the male is exercising his authority over God’s creation by naming it. The male is thus ruling (Gen 1:28) as God’s image-bearing vice-regent.
8. Gen 2:23—The male exercises his authority over the female by naming her just as he has been naming the animals (he does not give her the personal name, “Eve,” until 3:20, here he is “classifying” her, as he has presumably done with the animals).
9. The man’s naming of the woman, however, should not be construed as some form of impersonal exercise of duty, rude superiority, or abstract patriarchy, for the man’s statement upon his receipt of God’s gift of the woman is humanity’s first poem. The man’s spontaneous overflow of powerful emotion communicates tender solidarity, the woman’s origin, his role as her leader (naming her), and her essential equality with him (flesh of flesh). Here we see *ontological equality* (bone of bone, flesh of flesh) and *functional subordination* (she shall be called woman).
10. Both the order of the appearance of the characters in the narrative (Gen 2—God, Man, Woman; Gen 3—Satan, Woman, Man, God) and the indicators of the man’s role as the authority over the woman (in pre-fall Genesis 2) point to the fact that in tempting the woman, Satan is *subverting the created order*.
11. Gen 3:9—the conclusion that Satan has subverted the created order is confirmed by the fact that God holds the man accountable after the couple has sinned—even though Eve ate from the tree first. (Husbands, God is going to hold you accountable for the status of the marriage). This conclusion is echoed by Paul in Romans 5:12—“through one *man* sin entered the world.”
12. Gen 3:16—based on what we have seen from Genesis 2, complementary gender roles are not introduced as part of the curse on humanity. Rather, what seems to be introduced in Genesis 3:16 is feminine rebellion against the structure of authority that God has built into his creation.