

# God, Country, and Me

*Isaiah 46:9-10*

*“I am God and there is no other;  
I am God and there is none like me.  
I make known the end from the beginning,  
from ancient times, what is still to come.  
I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that  
I please.”*

*May 13<sup>th</sup>*

## **Family: Does God Accept Diversity?**

Topical

### **GETTING THE BIG PICTURE**

It is almost impossible today to open the paper without encountering another news article about “civil unions” or “gay marriage”. Family, at least the way we’ve known it in this country, is under major assault. But there is something in the middle of this that transcends marriage. It is our understanding of the uniqueness of gender—that thing called “male” and “female”. The bottom line in our world today is that few people can answer this question—“what is unique about being male or female?” The message for years has been that men and women are pretty much the same. But is this truly in line with God’s creative plan? What does God have to say about the importance of men and women? And what happens when we ignore this?

### *Optional Readings*

**Genesis 2** Revisit the creation of man and woman in all its glory.

### **GETTING INTO THE TEXT**

*Study Day(s)*

**READ & OBSERVE: Ephesians 5:21-33**

Write down anything you find interesting or unique about this passage.

### **ANSWER**

**The Lead In – Ephesians 5:18-21**

1. The grammar of these verses is easily missed in translation. Being filled with the Spirit is followed by some phrases that tell us “how” to be filled—by speaking, by singing, by giving thanks, and by submitting one to another. Why is this last one so important to understanding the whole context of Male/female relationships?
2. First off, define “submit”. Is it a word that means someone is being forced to do something they don’t want to do? Is it a negative word? Explain.

### **A Word to the Wives—Ephesians 5:22-24**

3. Describe the role of a godly wife to her husband. Why is submission to a husband such a good thing for a wife to do? What does it say about her relationship to the Lord?
4. Look up an article on “headship” (it is quite a controversial subject). What does it mean for the husband to be “head” of the wife? Does this have anything to do with how God created women—explain.

### **A Word to the Husbands—Ephesians 5:25-33**

5. First rule—don’t read the mail to the women (it’s none of your business). Focus on these verses since they are for you. What is the basic command of God to husbands (25)? Why does it say for a husband to love his wife, but never says for a wife to love her husband?
6. The instructions to the husbands are triple that to the wives—why? As you ponder all that is said to husbands, what stands out to you?
7. These instructions are put within the marriage context, but many (actually the majority) of the men and women in our world are single. Married or not, what insights do you get about “male” and “female” from Paul’s instructions to wives and husbands.

## **GETTING TO THE HEART**

### ***Application Day***

Often in our culture we question the biblical teachings on gender and gender roles. Are there areas in which you personally struggle with God’s will for you as a man or a woman? Where does the struggle come from?

A time for thanks. Building on last week’s message, God specially made you who you are. Take a moment and think through all the wonder of what it means to be either a “man” or a “woman”—and give thanks to a God who loved you enough to make you who you are.